

# VERNE FOSTER AND THE NEVADA MINING ASSOCIATION

Interviewee: Verne Foster

Interviewed: 1988

Published: 1988

Interviewer: R. T. King

UNOHP Catalog #146

## Description

Verne Foster was born into a mining family in 1902. Her father, Alex Wise, was the son of a prominent Winnemucca, Nevada, mine owner. As a child she lived with her family in Virginia City, Nevada, where her father was the mining engineer for the C & C from 1902 to 1910, when he relocated the family to California. In 1919 the family returned to Virginia City. In partnership with Roy Hardy, Alex Wise owned and operated the Flowery mines in Six Mile Canyon. Somewhat against her wishes, Mrs. Foster entered the University of Nevada in Reno in 1920. Her memories of the university and of life in Virginia City in the 1920s are both colorful and informative.

Verne married Herb Foster in 1927. Mr. Foster was a recent graduate of the University of Nevada, who went on to become perhaps the most famous high school coach in the state. In 1953, five years after her husband's untimely death, Mrs. Foster accepted a position with the Nevada Mining Association.

The Nevada Mine Operators Association was founded in 1913 to promote mining safety, to purchase needed materials (such as cyanide) at reduced bulk rates, and to influence legislation that might affect the mining industry. In 1915, Henry Rives became the association's secretary-treasurer, a position he held until his death in 1952. Largely in response to a changing regulatory and economic environment for mining, the association was reorganized in 1953 and renamed the Nevada Mining Association (NMA). The objectives of the NMA remained similar to those of the operator's association, but the membership was greatly expanded and there was increased sensitivity to the need for improved public relations. Lou Gordon was the first executive secretary, and the office was run by Verne Foster.

Verne Foster served under four executive secretaries, and witnessed or participated in many events and decisions that were important to the health of mining in Nevada. In this candid, well-informed oral history, there is a wealth of background material that brings into clear focus many significant factors in the development of the NMA. Important structural changes in the organization are discussed, and profiles are provided of some of the major personalities in mining and state government over the last thirty-five years. Mrs. Foster retired from the NMA in the spring of 1988. This is both her oral history and a personal account of the operations of the association from 1953 to 1988.



**VERNE FOSTER**  
**AND THE NEVADA MINING ASSOCIATION**

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MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY A GRANT  
FROM THE NEVADA MINING ASSOCIATION

An Oral History Conducted by R.T. King  
Edited by R.T. king

University of Nevada Oral History Program

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Printed in the United States of America

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## PREFACE TO THE DIGITAL EDITION

Established in 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) explores the remembered past through rigorous oral history interviewing, creating a record for present and future researchers. The program's collection of primary source oral histories is an important body of information about significant events, people, places, and activities in twentieth and twenty-first century Nevada and the West.

The UNOHP wishes to make the information in its oral histories accessible to a broad range of patrons. To achieve this goal, its transcripts must speak with an intelligible voice. However, no type font contains symbols for physical gestures and vocal modulations which are integral parts of verbal communication. When human speech is represented in print, stripped of these signals, the result can be a morass of seemingly tangled syntax and incomplete sentences—totally verbatim transcripts sometimes verge on incoherence. Therefore, this transcript has been lightly edited.

While taking great pains not to alter meaning in any way, the editor may have removed false starts, redundancies, and the “uhs,” “ahs,” and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled; compressed some passages which, in unaltered form, misrepresent the chronicler's meaning; and relocated some material to place information in its intended context. Laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of a sentence in which it occurs, and ellipses are used to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete...or that there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of the interviews in the UNOHP collection, we advise readers to keep in mind that these are remembered pasts, and we do not claim that the recollections are entirely free of error. We can state, however, that the transcripts accurately reflect the oral history recordings on which they were based. Accordingly, each transcript should be approached with the

same prudence that the intelligent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information. All statements made here constitute the remembrance or opinions of the individuals who were interviewed, and not the opinions of the UNOHP.

In order to standardize the design of all UNOHP transcripts for the online database, most have been reformatted, a process that was completed in 2012. This document may therefore differ in appearance and pagination from earlier printed versions. Rather than compile entirely new indexes for each volume, the UNOHP has made each transcript fully searchable electronically. If a previous version of this volume existed, its original index has been appended to this document for reference only. A link to the entire catalog can be found online at <http://oralhistory.unr.edu/>.

For more information on the UNOHP or any of its publications, please contact the University of Nevada Oral History Program at Mail Stop 0324, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, 89557-0324 or by calling 775/784-6932.

Alicia Barber  
Director, UNOHP  
July 2012

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## ORIGINAL PREFACE

Since 1965 the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) has produced over 200 works similar to the one at hand. Following the precedent established by Allan Nevins at Columbia University in 1948 (and perpetuated since by academic programs such as ours throughout the English-speaking world) these manuscripts are called oral histories. Unfortunately, some confusion surrounds the meaning of the term. To the extent that these 'oral' histories can be read, they are not oral, and while they are useful historical sources, they are not themselves history. Still, custom is a powerful force; historical and cultural records that originate in tape-recorded interviews are almost uniformly labeled 'oral histories,' and our program follows that usage.

Among oral history programs, differences abound in the way information is collected, processed and presented. At one end of a spectrum are some that claim to find scholarly value in interviews which more closely resemble spontaneous encounters than they do organized efforts to collect

information. For those programs, any preparation is too much. The interviewer operates the recording equipment and serves as the immediate audience, but does not actively participate beyond encouraging the chronicler to keep talking. Serendipity is the principal determinant of the historical worth of information thus collected.

The University of Nevada's program strives to be considerably more rigorous in selecting chroniclers, and in preparing for and focusing interviews. When done by the UNOHP, these firsthand accounts are meant to serve the function of primary source documents, as valuable in the process of historiography as the written records with which historians customarily work. However, while the properly conducted oral history is a reliable source, verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the UNOHP's operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, and that the chronicler has approved the edited manuscript, but it does not assert

that all are entirely free of error. Accordingly, our oral histories should be approached with the same caution that the prudent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries and other sources of historical information.

Each finished manuscript is the product of a collaboration—its structure influenced by the directed questioning of an informed, well-prepared interviewer, and its articulation refined through editing. While the words in this published oral history are essentially those of Mrs. Foster, the text is not a *verbatim* transcription of the interview as it occurred. In producing a manuscript, it is the practice of the UNOHP to employ the language of the chronicler, but to edit for clarity and readability. By shifting text when necessary, by polishing syntax, and by deleting or subsuming the questions of the interviewer, a first-person narrative with chronological and topical order is created. Mrs. Foster has reviewed the finished manuscript of her oral history and affirmed in writing that it is an accurate representation of her statements.

The UNOHP realizes that there will be some researchers who prefer to take their oral history straight, without the editing that was necessary to produce this text; they are directed to the tape recording. Copies of all or part of this work and the tapes from which it is derived are available from:

The University of Nevada  
Oral History Program  
Mailstop 0324  
University of Nevada-Reno  
Reno, Nevada 89557

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## INTRODUCTION

Before casino gambling began generating millions of dollars in revenue in the 1950s, Nevada's economy rested primarily on mining and cattle ranching. The first Euro-Americans entered Nevada in the 1840s aboard wagon trains headed for California. Several of the more enterprising souls remained to establish small agricultural and trading operations along major emigrant trails, but towns did not begin to form until discovery of the fabulously rich Comstock Lode in 1859. Virginia City soon became the most populous town west of the Rocky Mountains, and an extensive network of farms and ranches emerged in west-central Nevada in support of its mining operations. By 1864, when Nevada was admitted to the Union, its mines were producing \$24 million worth of ore a year.

The Comstock Lode was almost exhausted by the end of the 1880s, but fresh finds of precious metals were made in the interior of Nevada during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Concurrently, copper, tungsten, gypsum and other industrial ores were discovered in large

quantities, and the military market for these strategic metals during World War II and the Korean War revitalized mining in the state. Advanced recovery and refining techniques, combined with high prices for precious metals, have sustained the industry in the 1980s. Throughout the years—through boom and bust, through changes in the market, in technology, labor relations, and a host of other variables—most successful mining operations in Nevada have made common cause by belonging to a statewide mining organization.

The Nevada Mine Operators Association was founded in 1913 to promote mining safety, to purchase needed materials (such as cyanide) at reduced bulk rates, and to influence legislation that might affect the mining industry. In 1915, Henry Rives became the association's secretary-treasurer, a position he held until his death in 1952. Largely in response to a changing regulatory and economic environment for mining, the association was reorganized in 1953 and renamed the Nevada Mining Association (NMA). The objectives of the NMA remained

similar to those of the operators' association, but the membership was greatly expanded and there was increased sensitivity to the need for improved public relations. Lou Gordon was the first executive secretary, and the office was run by Verne Foster. Mrs. Foster retired from the NMA in the spring of 1988. This is both her oral history and a personal account of the operations of the association from 1953 to 1988.

Verne Foster was born into a mining family in 1902. Her father, Alex Wise, was the son of a prominent Winnemucca, Nevada, mine owner. As a child Verne lived with her family in Virginia City, where her father was the mining engineer for the C & C from 1902 to 1910, when he relocated the family to California. In 1919 the family returned to Virginia City. In partnership with Roy Hardy, Alex Wise owned and operated the Flowery mines in Six Mile Canyon. Somewhat against her wishes, Verne entered the University of Nevada in Reno in 1920. Her memories of the university and of life in Virginia City in the 1920s are both colorful and informative.

Verne married Herb Foster in 1927. Mr. Foster was a recent graduate of the University of Nevada, who went on to become perhaps the most famous high school coach in the state. In 1953, five years after her husband's untimely death, Verne accepted a position with the Nevada Mining Association. She served under four executive secretaries, and witnessed or participated in many events and decisions that were important to the health of mining in Nevada. In this candid, well-informed oral history, there is a wealth of background material that brings into clear focus many significant factors in the development of the NMA. Important structural changes in the organization are discussed, and profiles are provided of some

of the major personalities in mining and state government over the last thirty-five years.

The Oral History Program of the University of Nevada (UNOHP) is pleased to present this volume to the public. Verne Foster was a forthright chronicler with a strong memory and a well-developed sense of the past. She was a delight to work with, as were her former employers. In support of this project, the NMA made a substantial grant to the program, and donated an important group of manuscripts, documents and photographs, which have since been deposited in the Special Collections Department of the University of Nevada-Reno Library. The NMA asked nothing in return, except a copy of the work; nor was it ever anticipated that they might. As with all volumes published by the UNOHP, the reader can be confident that the content of this oral history has not been influenced or reviewed by any outside agency. These are the unvarnished memories of Verne Foster.

R. T. King  
University of Nevada-Reno  
December 1988



VERNE FOSTER  
PICTURED WITH SENATOR CHIC HECHT IN 1986.

From the Nevada Mining Association Collection, courtesy of Special  
Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Library.





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## FAMILY AND CHILDHOOD

I was born in San Francisco in 1902 in the house of my mother's parents, Fred and Louise Attinger. Grandfather Attinger was in the clothing business, and my grandmother was a housewife. Each was German-born. My grandfather came to the United States when he was 17. He was opposed to serving in the German army, and he came over here and was established for about two years. Then he sent for my grandmother, and they were married in San Francisco, and they eventually had six children.

My grandparents lived on Turk Street, right opposite the park. Of course, they went through the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. Fortunately, their house wasn't one that was damaged or burned, but some of the gas mains were breaking down, and everybody was evacuated. They camped in the park, right across the street with the other refugees.

I knew my grandparents fairly well, because at various times in my life I stayed with them. When my mother would travel with my father, I stayed with my grandparents. They were very happy people. They loved to

dance, and, in fact, my grandfather was the one that taught me to dance. He also was very much interested in gymnastics, and all of his boys did gymnastics. But, of course, the girls didn't. In those days girls didn't do those kinds of things. They were ladies. [laughs]

Grandfather Attinger was a custom tailor. He made suits to order for people, and if you got too fat or too thin, he altered them and that sort of thing. He had apprenticed in Germany for that. My grandmother was a typical housewife. She kept house and she sewed and crocheted and she cooked and all that sort of stuff. But they loved to dance, and they used to go out and dance quite a bit. It was a very happy family—we all had a lot of fun.

My grandfather was born on Christmas Eve, so, of course, Christmas Eve and Christmas day were big holidays in our family, and everybody came to my grandmother and grandfather's house. They had raised five of their six children, and they lost just one, who died of scarlet fever. One of my uncles was sort of a gay bachelor. He didn't marry

until later in life, and he just wasn't interested in having any kids, but the rest of them all married and had children, and the Christmas parties got to be bigger and bigger and bigger. My grandparents had a big, old-fashioned house, and, as they had six children, they had a big dining room and a lot of bedrooms and all that sort of thing.

My mother, whose name was Louise, was the next to youngest child, the fifth child. She was born some time in the 1880s. Her parents wanted everyone to go through high school, and then they wanted the boys to have a profession so that they could be able to earn their own living, but none of them ever went to college or had any aspirations that way or were raised that way. My grandparents came from the Old Country, but they became very American. My grandfather forbade German to be spoken in the house. He said, "You're an American now. I'm a naturalized citizen, your grandmother's a naturalized citizen, and you're a citizen of the United States." He said, "We speak English," and he didn't let them speak German, which I regret, because I would have liked to have learned another language. But he just said, "Now we're Americans," and that's it. But they still had the Old Country idea that everybody got through high school and went to work. They didn't think about college or anything like that.

My mother was like my grandparents: she liked to go out and she liked to have fun, and she liked to have a good time. In those days they had a lot of dances and they had a lot of masquerade balls and all that kind of stuff. During the day she worked around the house, helping my grandmother until she got married. Women weren't supposed to have a profession. They were supposed to get married in those days, which my mother

did. She could never have earned her living, because she was never trained. She was married rather young to my father. He had graduated from the University of California, and he worked his way all through school. He went to the University of California when he was 16 and graduated when he was 20 with a mining engineering degree. My mother was two years older than my father, and this was always a sore subject.

My paternal grandparents were Alexander and Julia Wise. She was born in England and he was born in Germany. I don't know how they happened to come to this country, but they originally came to the South. I knew my grandmother Wise very well. She was one of the old matriarchs. She was right, no matter what. She lived to be in her nineties. My father used to send her money for taxi fare and different things like that, and when she was 85 she called my father up and said she wanted him to buy her an automobile. He said, "What are you going to do with an automobile?"

She said, "Well, I'm going to drive it."

Imagine...85! She had never driven a car in her life. My father said, "Look. *No way* am I going to buy you a car. Not only will it be a menace to you, but to all the people in San Francisco." Because she'd be the type that would say, "Well, get out of my way. I'm coming, and that's it!" Of course, it was impossible to even consider buying her a car, but that's the way she was. And to the day she died, she belonged to clubs and the Eastern Star lodge. Every night of her life, if she didn't go some place, she didn't have it made. She would just get a cab and go to this meeting or go to that club meeting, and that was it. She wasn't about to sit home. She did that until practically the day she died. And she had all of her own teeth, and she could

read the telephone book without glasses. She never wore glasses in her life.

Grandfather Wise was interested in mining, and they eventually wound up in Nevada. He had a sulfur mine up out of Winnemucca. I never did know my grandfather Wise. He was quite young when he died. He supposedly had a nervous breakdown; what he really died of, I don't know. In those days, if they didn't know what something was, they said you had a nervous breakdown. And up in Winnemucca, what kind of doctors were there then?

At one time my grandfather Wise was quite wealthy, and he owned practically the whole town of Winnemucca. After he died, my grandmother had a big fight with the bank, and the bank confiscated all of her property. When others later tried to trace the title in the 1930s, it was clouded, because the bank didn't have a right to do that. We got all of these affidavits and things to sign over the title...like, to the opera house and the county courthouse, because there was no legal title to it. We could have made a lot of trouble for the town, which I wasn't going to do. My aunt Hattie—my father's brother's wife—was a widow, and she wanted to sue. I said, "Look, let's forget it. This is past history, and why make a lot of trouble for the town? And you're not going to win, anyway. They're going to say that possession is nine points of the law, if you know what I mean. And they could go in and clear title through a lawsuit." I didn't think there was any use bucking it, and I didn't intend to buck it.

My grandmother Wise had her own carriage and horses and jewelry and clothes, and they had a lovely home up there from what I understand, so my grandfather must have been fairly affluent. They had three children—my father, Alex M. Wise, Louis and

Phoebe. Louis died of a heart attack when he was only in his early thirties. He worked for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, as editor of the rotogravure section. He was a very talented artist, who did a lot of oil painting and stuff like that.

My father grew up in Winnemucca. After his father died, he was bound and determined to go to college; my grandfather had wanted him to go. He worked his way through school at the University of California in Berkeley. I think my mother and father met at a dance while he was at the university. That would be logical, because my mother and my grandparents were always going dancing. I think they met at a dance, and that's how they got involved.

After he graduated from school my father went up to eastern Oregon to mine up there. My mother went up with him, after they were married. And my poor mother, coming out of San Francisco.... They had tents up there that they lived in, and the lumber was green and the boards had separated, and every time she'd drop a fork it would go through the cracks in the floor. She had a wood and coal stove, which she had never seen in her life, because in San Francisco you cooked with gas. And they had pack rats, so every time you put something down, it disappeared with the pack rats. My father decided that if she was going to have this baby (me), he'd better send her to San Francisco to her parents where she could have it in peace and not be bothered with the separation of the boards in the tent and trying to light the fire and the pack rats. So I was born in San Francisco.

The less my mother talked about eastern Oregon, the happier she was. She didn't want to remember that. That was a horror story as far as she was concerned. My mother grew up in an age where if things didn't go right,

you immediately went into hysterics. We were very careful around my mother not to bring up subjects that she wasn't interested in. Or if you got hurt, you didn't go to my mother, because at the sight of blood, out she went. She wasn't good in emergencies. She was used to being brought up sitting on a satin cushion, and that's the way she wanted it. She was a good housekeeper and took care of the house and all that kind of stuff, but she didn't want to be bothered with any of the gory details of life, please.

\* \* \* \* \*

When I was about six months old my father got a job in Virginia City, and my mother moved up there with him. The job was with the C & C [Consolidated Virginia & California] silver mine, which was one of the deepest mines around. It was all underground mining at that time, and all those mines in Virginia City were plagued with water. They had to keep pumps going all the time to keep the water out so that people could work there. They were kind of rough times, but my father always had a good job up there, and we never suffered.

When we first moved up there we lived in the house that Lucius Beebe later bought and renovated. That was an old house, and it had a marble fireplace in the living room and a tin bathtub in the bathroom. I can remember those old tin bathtubs. If you didn't get the thing real warm, they were not all that comfortable. And they had mahogany railings around them, you know—very fancy. Later we lived in the C & C company house up on B Street. It had a big lawn and a white picket fence around it, and we lived there for quite a while.

The C & C company house was a funny old place. It started out as a one-bedroom

place, and as the mines got more affluent they built on to it. It was sort of like a maze: they'd built a wing here and an el there and another wing. You could get lost in that darned place. And then they had one bedroom upstairs, and that was my bedroom. I used to go up there and stay up there when I was a kid. I kind of liked to be by myself, so I had the upstairs bedroom and everybody else slept on the ground floor. The house had a great big yard, a beautiful yard with lawn and trees and a garden.

Virginia City was a typical small town. I went to the First Ward School through a couple of grades, and then they wanted to transfer me to the Fourth Ward School, and I didn't want any part of that. I raised holy cow and I dragged my heels and everything. But I went to the Fourth Ward School for about a year before we moved back to San Francisco.

I used to go down on the corner of B Street where Chung Kee, the Chinaman, had a big Chinese store. He had the most gorgeous abacus board! He tried to teach me to use the abacus board when I was about seven years old, but between his Chinese and my English, I never did learn.

On my visits to Chung Kee's, I discovered that all these beautiful ladies were down there in the neighborhood, so I used to go and visit them all the time. Oh, they had marabou negligees, and they used to make doll clothes for me and give me candy and stuff. They never invited me in their houses, but I used to go down every day and visit them after I visited Chung Kee. One day somebody said to my dad, "What's your daughter apprenticing to be?"

And my father said, "I don't know. What do you mean?"

And he said, "Well, she's a daily habitue of the line—down there every day."

So my father said to me, "Baby, what do you do after school?"

"Well," I said, "A lot of times I go down and see Chung Kee and then I go and see all those pretty ladies down there."

And he said, "You can still go and see Chung Kee, but you can't go and see the pretty ladies."

Well, my heart was broken. I said, "Well, I have to go and say goodbye." So I went, and I said, "My father won't let me come and see you anymore, and I'm heartbroken."

And they said, "Well, we understand."

And I said, "I don't know what you understand. I don't know why I can't come and see you."

And they said, "Well, that's all right. Don't worry about it."

So that was the first gray hairs that I gave my father. But I couldn't see any reason why I couldn't go up and see those pretty ladies. As I say, they made doll clothes for me, and gave me candy.

In those days, everybody got along with everybody in Virginia City. Of course, you didn't *like* everybody, but for all intents and purposes, everybody got along with everybody else. Nobody said, "You belong on this side of the street and we belong on that side of the street." It wasn't like San Francisco. There you were either born north of the slot, which was north of Market Street, or you were born south of the slot. Those north of the slot were the elite, and south of the slot weren't so great. We didn't have that sort of thing in Virginia City.

My mother felt all right about living in Virginia City. Of course, once she got rid of the wood and coal stove and got an electric.... My father was great. He thought women should have everything. I think she had one of the first electric stoves and one of the first refrigerators and one of the first automatic

washing machines. He didn't believe that women should do drudge work.

\* \* \* \* \*

While we were there, the C & C had labor problems like everybody else did. My father said that he threatened to pull the pumps if the strikers wouldn't come back to work. He said, "All right. Go ahead and strike. I'll pull the pumps and *nobody* is going to go back to work." But what they didn't know is that one of the pumps needed repair, and when he pulled that one up for repair and they found out about it, they thought he was being serious. So they came back to work. And he said, "If you belong to the union, I don't want to know about it. I'm not going to deal with the unions any more." And he never did, which was phenomenal in Virginia City, because it was one of the biggest union towns they ever had.

My father always said, "A successful mining engineer is one who can keep his mucking periods as far apart as possible." In other words, if you were a mucker you got \$4 a day, so you wanted to keep mucking periods out of your life. I can remember going down in the C & C mine and going into one of what they called stopes. One man would be mucking and the other man would be playing the hose on him to keep him from fainting, it was so hot down there. Of course, nowadays OSHA [the federal Office of Safety and Health Administration] would probably have a fit right there and give birth to kittens or something. Those mines were noted for being very hot in certain spots. They'd hit a rich stope, and they'd mine the stope out. One guy would dig for a half hour or twenty minutes or whatever, and the other guy would play the hose on him. It would get *well* over a hundred degrees down there—about



140 to 160 degrees. And that's the way they worked.

They had beautiful stations below ground where the trams came in from the shafts, and where they unloaded the ore. They were very well kept and nicely lighted. In one of the tunnels that led off from the C & C, the timbers caught on fire, and it was a tunnel that led to very rich ore. Every time they tried to open it the fire would flare up again. It had to be sealed off, and, as far as I know, it's still sealed off. When my father was running the place, he tried to open it several times, and the minute the air would get in there the fire would go *ppfffft*. He never could get it out. It got buried in the timbers. They used to do what they called square sets in the tunnels with big six-by-six timbers. The fire just got imbedded in them, and every time you opened it up and it got some air it started to burn again.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1910 we left Virginia City. My father went to mine in the gold fields of Calaveras County, California, and my mother and the rest of the family returned to San Francisco. We had a flat in San Francisco out on Laurel Street, and from there I went to Madison grammar school, which was about six blocks from where I lived. On this side of Laurel Street was one of the old cemeteries, where I used to get in trouble. I used to love to read, and I'd skate over to the library on 18th Avenue and I'd forget to watch the time. Then I'd skate like mad and get to the cemetery, and then I'd come across the cemetery, and take my skates off and drop them and my books and my skates over the wall. My father caught me one night. Pitch dark, you know...but I was never afraid. And he said, "What in the heck are you doing in the cemetery?"

I said, "Well, it's a shortcut, and I was late to dinner."

He said, "Just don't be late for dinner, and I don't want any shortcuts through the cemetery."

I said, "What difference does it make? All those people in there are dead."

He said, "A lot of tramps have no place to stay, and they stay in the cemetery. They might take your purse or something."

And I said, "Well, you know I don't have any money."

He said, "They don't know that."

In those days you didn't discuss morals. You just gave people warnings. It's like I said to my father, "You're always telling me things I can't do." I used to take some books and I'd go out in the Presidio in the eucalyptus trees and read. Of course, then he'd tell me I couldn't go up to the Presidio. If I got up there early enough, the soldiers used to let me ride the mules down to the creek to water the mules. Well, my father said, "No, that's not for you." I was just lucky that I grew up without any incidents. I guess I was just so naive that everybody thought, "This is a real naive, dumb little gal."

Much of the time from 1910 to 1920 my mother went with my father every place he went to pursue mining. I would stay in San Francisco in my grandparents' house part of the time; I lived with my parents part of the time, or if my mother went traveling in Virginia City, I got farmed out at the boarding house. Wherever I hung my hat was home. That's the way I grew up. I never got homesick, because when I was with my family that was great, and when I wasn't, I hung my hat someplace and that was home.

My brother was four-and-a-half years younger than I was, and he was kind of the apple of my mother's eye, so my mother wasn't about to leave my brother any place. He went

with them. Of course, he wasn't in school like I was, and it would be natural for them. Later on as I got older and they traveled, then my brother and I stayed in San Francisco. I kept house for him, and we both went to school when we weren't fighting about something. [laughs]

When I was 12 or 14 years old, and my father said I couldn't go to the Presidio, then I used to go up to Chinatown. I met an old Chinaman there who had an old store that looked like a hole in the wall. He would only have one thing on display, like pearls or jade. I used to flatten my nose against his window. He invited me in, and in his back room he had a huge safe containing jade and pearls that he used to custom order for people.

Looking at this funny little store, you had no idea what was in the back. He mostly did custom ordering, or if some of these wealthy people wanted stuff, he would take it up and display it at their homes. He did very little display work down in his shop. I learned about jade and pearls from him. We'd go in the back room and we'd have tea and fortune cookies or litchi nuts or whatever, until my father found out I was spending time in the back room with a Chinaman. He said, "You can't go there anymore."

I said, "You sure cramp my style, no matter what I do."

My mother didn't interfere with my father and myself. She figured that my father was the head of the household, and whatever my father said was fine. I felt closer to my father than to my mother. At the time that I went to Madison Grammar School we had some very fine teachers there. They were older teachers, and they were dedicated teachers, and I really got a very fine grammar school education. Then when I went to Girl's High School, I had the same thing there. There were a lot of the older teachers who'd taught for years. They

were dedicated; they had to be dedicated, because they weren't making that much salary in those days. You either learned from them or else. There was no nonsense. You were given your homework, and the next day you were expected to have it done. And if you didn't have it done you went to the principal's office.





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## AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, 1920-1921

I graduated from high school in 1919. My family moved back to Virginia City in the same year, when my father again began working on the Comstock Lode. I stayed with my grandmother, graduated from high school in San Francisco, and then my father wanted me to go to the University of Nevada because it was close to Virginia City.

I started at the university in January, 1920. I lived in Manzanita Hall. Miss Margaret Mack was the dean of women, and she had the room right off the entrance way in Manzanita Hall. Miss Mack had no sense of humor and no leniency towards anybody. On weeknights you had to be in your room by 8:00 and Fridays and Saturdays and Sundays you had to be in by 10:00, if you can imagine such a curfew. Of course, I never made it, and I got caught. The first two weeks I was there I got 'campused'. When you got campused it meant you couldn't go off the campus at all. You had to stay right on the campus and eat that terrible food that they had there. [laughs]

Miss Mack had a few little spies around who reported when people weren't in. One of the gals that we knew lived on the ground floor, so when we were out late the guys would boost us in the window. Miss Mack caught on to it. Once somebody boosted me in the window and I rolled under the bed, and she said, "Miss Wise, I saw you. Come out from under the bed."

That first semester, when I lived on the second story of Manzanita Hall, I had some friends who worked in a drugstore. We had a big rope, and we'd let the rope down and they'd put ice cream and hamburgers and stuff on the end of it and we'd hoist it up to the room. One day Miss Mack was outside and caught on to that, so then we couldn't have any more food at night. It was a fun time.

There was one so-called nightclub downtown, and that was off limits. They had a bar and they had dancing and all that sort of stuff. We were not supposed to be exposed to that sort of thing. Anyway, what could we do when we had to be back by 8:00? You hardly

get out when you have to be home. It was ridiculous.

We didn't do too much in town. About the most we did was go to the movies or go someplace to eat or something like that. The university people and the town people were kind of separated. One time I went with a boy who worked for Standard Oil, and that was kind of stepping out of bounds. When you went to the university dances, you usually went with university people, and the chaperons were university people. The dances were held up in the old gym. And the sororities would have parties, and, of course, the fraternities would have parties.

Students didn't have automobiles like they do nowadays. When you went downtown, 90 percent of the time you walked downtown and walked back, and that was quite a hike, particularly when you were on curfew. It took you at least 20 or 30 minutes to walk downtown, and by the time you got downtown and had something to eat and then turned around and walked back, it was 8:00, so that the town people and the university people didn't mix too much. However, a lot of the town people had been ex-university people, like sorority people or fraternity people, and during rushing season they would hold open house at their houses—have parties there.

When I was on campus people didn't drink like they do nowadays. You just didn't drink. You had soft drinks or something like that, and the people that did drink were kind of frowned upon. Drinking was not a thing that was an "in" thing at the university...nor smoking, I might add. It was an entirely different era.

The sororities were pretty strong on campus, but when I went there they only had one national. The fraternities were more national: they had SAE and Sigma Nu and

the Phi Delt. Tri Delt, I think, was the one national sorority at that time, and then later the other sororities went national. I was never interested in belonging to a sorority, so I really don't know too much about them. My father was a little disappointed in that. He thought I should belong to a sorority, but I'm not a believer. I'm not a believer to this day. I don't belong to clubs and all that kind of stuff. To me, when you belonged to a sorority it was rather limiting. You were supposed to do things in the sorority and go with people that the sorority approved of, and this wasn't my lifestyle.

At the time I went to the University of Nevada they didn't have any sorority houses. Everybody lived in the dormitory, and it was later that some of the places got their own sorority houses. At that time the SAEs and the Sigma Nus had their own houses, and so did other fraternities, but the sororities didn't.

In addition to dances on campus, there were other sorts of social events. They used to have small fairs...like, somebody would have a fishbowl concession and somebody would have something else, in sort of a country fair thing. That would be set up at the gym. Everybody would enter into the spirit of things. Every once in a while they'd have a masquerade party, and once in a while the fraternities would give dances out of town, which wasn't too well approved of. You kind of had to sneak around to go to those, but they'd hire some hall some place. And they had an old hall up here, called Maple Hall, that was not taboo. It was a nice place, and a lot of the sororities and fraternities would have dances at Maple Hall. It was in the north part of town.

Moana Hot Springs was popular with people on campus as well. It was supposed to be off limits, but we used to go out there and dance. I don't know whether any of the kids

went out there and went swimming or not, but the fraternities held a few of their dances out there, and it was a popular spot.

Margaret Mack was behind the number of things and activities that were off limits. She was an elderly spinster, and I don't think she had ever had a date in her life. She just believed that everything was wrong! As an extreme example: my father used to indulge me in clothes, and when fishnet hose came out, my father bought me a very fancy pair. I started out one night, and Miss Mack came out and said, "You are not going out in those hose! You go up and change!"

I said, "Miss Mack, I've got news for you. My father bought these hose for me, and you can check it with him. I fully intend to go out with these hose!"

I was not popular with Miss Mack. If your skirt was too short or she thought you had too much makeup on or anything.... She'd kind of watch you when you went out on dates, and if she didn't approve of how you looked, she'd send you back to your room to change.

When Manzanita Lake was frozen over, we used to like to go out and skate at night. They had a laundry room downstairs, so we'd put on our robes over our clothes, and put our skating boots and skates in the laundry basket, and go down. We could stay down in the laundry room until 10:00. Of course, then we'd take off our robes and sneak out the back door and go skating. One night there was a hole in the ice, but fortunately two guys had ahold of me, and they dragged me through this. By the time we got through skating my boots had frozen on my feet. I had to climb the stairs on my hands and knees, dragging this damn laundry basket behind me! [laughs]

There was a covered walkway that went from Manzanita to the Gow House, which

is what we called the dining hall. [In early twentieth century slang, a *gow* house was an opium den, from the Cantonese *kao* for opium.—Ed.] I can still remember the food; it was something else again! It was wholesome food, but there was no imagination to it. If you got vegetables, like peas, they were always only boiled; they didn't have any particular seasoning to them, and they didn't have any butter on them or anything like that. If you got peas, you got peas. That was it. Of course, steak was unheard of. You got stew and all that kind of stuff. I presume there was nothing wrong with the food, but it wasn't the kind of food that a lot of people were accustomed to. But you either ate it or you starved, it was as simple as that.

Food was not allowed in the dorm rooms. I say that with tongue in cheek. [laughs] My mother used to send me food, and everybody used to gather up in my room. I finally worked my way up to the fourth floor during my second term in Manzanita Hall, and, of course, Miss Mack couldn't quite make the fourth floor, so I had a hot plate and I had an electric coffee pot. Every weekend my folks would bring me down all this food, or I'd go home and pick up all this food. So that was kind of the gathering place for everybody. They all came up there and ate—and studied. It wasn't just a fun thing, but they came up and had coffee and cake, or if wild ducks were in season, I'd have wild ducks or chicken or whatever. So I didn't starve to death.

The fourth floor was the preferred floor as far as not getting caught at things; but the heat never got up there, and the sun never did, either. The funny gables that they have on Manzanita Hall were the fourth floor rooms. Everybody used to put on woolen socks and lined moccasins and heavy robes to come up there, because otherwise you'd freeze to death. But it was fun. When you're young and starry-

eyed and bushy-tailed, those kinds of things don't bother you. So, you freeze.

In order to get out of the dormitory at night, there were about six of us who went down to Reno High School and took shorthand and typing, because we could be out after 8:00 at night if we did that. Although we did it in a joking way, it was really very helpful. Those high school teachers didn't fool around. If you were going to come in there and take shorthand and typing, you took shorthand and typing and worked at it! And I enjoyed it. I got my first taste of being in the business world doing typing and shorthand down there. We went for a full semester at nights, from 7:00 to 9:00, two nights a week. It was free; you didn't pay for things like you do now. It used to be the attitude that everybody was entitled to education. Of course, you had to pay in college, but not for night courses and stuff that they gave at high school. They just gave them as a matter of course, and we had some very good teachers in those night courses down there.

To me the social life at the university was very *normal*. Nowadays it wouldn't be, but we were easily amused—let's put it that way. We didn't think we had to go out and get drunk or high on drugs or anything to have a good time. We just went out and had a good time. We danced and laughed and we played hard and we worked hard, and that was it.

I took trigonometry from Professor Charles Haseman, who was a very strict professor. I was always very good in math, but trigonometry just wasn't my thing. I limped through the thing, but I did try and work at it, and Mr. Haseman gave me a passing credit out of it. Either he was sorry for me or he didn't want me back in his class. I never figured out which one.

Professor Haseman was about six feet tall and a nice looking person. Later on my

husband was quite a mathematician, and he was taking work under him for a master's degree. We got to be quite friendly with Professor Haseman and his wife. He was a very personable person, but he was noted for being strict in his courses. If you didn't want to work, you didn't take a course from him. He probably was a legend up there. If he got mad at somebody, he didn't think anything at all of throwing an eraser or a piece of chalk. If he thought you weren't paying attention, you got an eraser or a piece of chalk heaved at you, and you'd better duck.

The math class was taught upstairs in Morrill Hall. Even in those days Morrill Hall wasn't a plush place to take courses. Nowadays the kids would probably take a look at it and say, "I'm not going to work in that kind of an environment." They had old desks and chalkboards and all that kind of stuff.

They had a lecture series on campus. It didn't make any difference whether the lectures were popular or not, you had to go. It was a must. If you were taking English, and they had somebody lecturing on English, you either went to hear the English lecture, or else! It was mandatory. People were expected to do things, and I don't think we particularly resented it. Most of the people they had were good lecturers, and we all went and everybody participated. And studying wasn't onerous to most of us. There were only a few people who didn't like to study and weren't at school for studying purposes.

Athletics were big. The University of Nevada had a very strong football team at that time, because they had James "Rabbit" Bradshaw and other fine players. In fact, the year after I went to Nevada they beat the University of California, which was considered quite a feat. They also had good basketball teams and good track teams. In those days, athletics were not subsidized the

way they are now. Some of the few boys that came from elsewhere got board and room, and that was it. Rabbit Bradshaw got board and room, but he worked, too, to get spending money and buy clothes and stuff. I think it was in 1920 that the University of Nevada sent a football team over to Hawaii to play over there. A lot of the football players were also basketball players, so while they were over there they played basketball with the Japanese boys, and I guess they were well received over there. They wine and dined them and took them all around to the different islands and everything. Herb Foster, whom I later married, was on that particular team and he told me about it. He said that he didn't enjoy it all that much. They took him to small islands around there, and he was prone to get seasick. He said first he was afraid he was going to die, and then he was afraid he wasn't going to die. By the time he got straightened around to go and see a few of the sights, it was time to turn around and get on this bumpy boat ride.

(I did not meet my husband here at the university. I knew who he was when I was going to the university, but I didn't really get involved with him until later, when I came back to Reno and worked here. I had a date with somebody else, and he was tagging along—that's how I first met him.)

When I went to the University of Nevada there weren't a lot of affluent people there. There were some, but most of the kids worked to get up there, and they were dedicated. They worked their way through school, or they'd gotten scholarships, and going to college meant something to them. I didn't have to work my way through college, but I was one of the lucky ones. We didn't have the sheep and the goats. Everybody was friendly whether you worked your way through college or whether you had somebody to put you through college, which my father did.

An awful lot of kids worked their way through school. Many worked in Gow House, the dining hall. They waited tables or washed dishes or set tables or stuff like that. Some of the kids delivered newspapers, and some had odd jobs at the newspaper. A lot of students worked in soda fountains. The town people cooperated with the university in that way, and they were very good about giving kids jobs. The neighborhood surrounding the university campus at that time was just private houses. If you wanted to eat you had to go downtown to the Block N, a soda fountain, or someplace like that. The Monarch Cafe was on Virginia Street and the Elite Cafe was over on Center Street. There weren't any eating places around the university at that time, no clothing stores, bookstores...nothing like that.

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In Reno when I was at the university we didn't have an ethnic problem. Henry J. Kaiser started all of these ethnic problems during World War II, when he brought all the blacks from the South out and had them working the shipyards and stuff off the West Coast. They started to spread. But we didn't have a lot of ethnic people up here.

On campus, as far as I remember, we didn't have any black or Chinese or Japanese students. The only students I can recall are white...they had a few Spanish kids there, but they were mostly white.

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The Palm Cafe was over on Center Street. That was a Chinese place. Chinese people kind of keep to themselves. They are not very pushy. They had the Chinese laundries and stuff like that, and they didn't go into the

white clubs. They had their own clubs where they played fantan and stuff like that.

Most of the Indians were on the reservation east of town. They came up here and worked in Reno, and when they got through with their jobs they went back. Most of them did domestic work or garden work or something like that.

Big Bill Bailey had a black or Negro club, or whatever you want to call it, over near the Railroad Express Office. I never had enough courage to go in there; I wasn't that interested in getting hit over the head with a tire iron or something. White people didn't go in there; it was strictly for blacks, and black people did not go into any of the white clubs. We didn't have that many black people here. The only ones here were black railroad porters, and they usually were here on layoff between San Francisco and Chicago or something.

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For a variety of reasons, I decided I did not want to stay at the University of Nevada after my first year, which had been essentially a repeat of what I had learned in high school in San Francisco.

When I first came to Reno, the pavement ended about three miles out of town, and the rest of it was all dirt road. One of the things that upset me was every time you went for an automobile ride you had to come home and have a chiropractic treatment. It was just bumpy, washboard roads. People would want to go out for a Sunday drive, and I said, "It's not for me. I want to go back to California."

I finally persuaded my father to send me back to California. I enjoyed the people of Reno and I enjoyed living here, but I did *definitely* want to get back to California. And so when I finally got to the University of California I was very happy.



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## VIRGINIA CITY IN THE 1920S

Some people by the name of Pfeiffer, an old German family, owned a lot of mining claims down in Six-Mile Canyon below Virginia City. They had one gold prospect that my father was interested in, called the Flowery mines. He came back in 1919 with the idea of developing the Flowery mines, and did so very successfully, staying in Virginia City until about 1928. At first when he came back he was with United Comstock when they were doing that big mining project there. Then he pulled out of it, and he and Roy Hardy went into partnership in the Flowery mines. Then Roy decided he was too busy with the United Comstock, so my father bought him out, and then he ran the Flowery mines alone, quite successfully. When he just about had the Flowery mines mined out, he decided to take a flyer on the Lady Bryan, but that did not prove very successful. He didn't work at that very long. It wasn't a good prospect.

What made the Flowery mines profitable on through the 1920s when so many of the other mines up on the Comstock were failing was they did not have the same heat and water

problems that the other deep shaft mines did. And for another thing, the Flowery was predominantly gold rather than silver. Silver was a by-product, really. Gold made it a paying proposition.

My father didn't have a large operation. I'd say he had maybe 15 men working for him, tops. It was a small operation, a one-man operation. It wasn't a company operation, and I don't think a big company would have been interested in it. It wouldn't have paid them unless it was just as a side thing. It took a small operator, who was interested and would spend his time down there working around the clock.

My father never discussed the profitability of the operation with me. In those days, men didn't really discuss that type of thing at home. Home was one place, and the workplace was another place. This was an era when women didn't enter into these kinds of things. Of course, though, I was more interested in these things than the ordinary person. I would have taken up mining as a profession, but in those days women mining engineers

were something else again. You just didn't do that. I don't think that at the time that I went to the University of California there were *any* women enrolled in the mining course. I said to my father, "I want to enter the mining school and become a mining engineer."

He said, "Don't be silly. You're going to fight an uphill battle. You'll be the only..."

Another thing was that in those days in order to get a degree in mining engineering, you had to have so many hours of practical work. You had to go out and actually work in the mines in order to get your degree. And my father could never see me on the end of a muck stick. He said, "They don't make shovels small enough for you to be able to handle them." I am five feet, one half inch tall, and I weigh between 80 and 85 pounds.

My father was very strict about safety problems. He had a rule: if he caught a man ignoring a safety rule or breaking a safety rule, they were fired right on the spot; they didn't have any recourse. He would have *no* part of it. He said, "Not only are you endangering your own life, but you don't know how many other people's lives you're endangering." And he had very few accidents. I remember he had one accident. This guy was standing and talking to somebody, and he had a hold of the end of a rail tie, and an ore car jumped the track and cut one of his fingers off. That was about the only accident I can ever remember him having in his mines, because he was a stickler for safety.

They didn't have too many accidents in the mines up at Virginia City. They didn't have all the rules that they should have, but people were pretty well cognizant of safety. Of course, in those days I don't think there were as many hazards as there are now. They didn't have all that big machinery. Of course, they had the cyanide mills and the trucks and stuff like that, but I think that the

modern machinery has contributed a lot to the accident rate. People are a little more careless. They get on a truck and they think they've got the brakes or they've got this or that or the other thing, and they'll take a few more chances. That's not what you should do when you're wheeling around a 50-ton truck.

My father was friendly with the Merrill-Crowe people, and down in his mill he helped perfect what they call the Merrill-Crowe precipitation process. It was a new development in milling, and he did a lot of the testing for them. In fact, they used to laugh and they said, "You're the only guy who can keep a mill running on baling wire and galvanized tin." He'd experiment with this process they had, and then he'd upgrade it or change it around or something. And they'd come laugh and they'd say, "Well, the baling wire and the galvanized tin have come in handy again." Of course, then they'd refine the process, but he helped. It was a very famous process at one time.

Tom Crowe and Mr. Merrill and Lou Mills, who also worked on it, used to come up for duck hunting season, and come up to check on the mill periodically. They were from Palo Alto. Crowe and Merrill used to lecture at Stanford on this. They were highly skilled metallurgists.

My father had a pretty good percentage of extraction from his ore—from 85 to about 90 percent—and part of it was due to this Merrill-Crowe precipitation process. It was a fine tuning of refining, is really what it was, and because my father did do a lot of developing along metallurgical lines, we used to have a lot of people come out to the Flowery mines. When they came to Virginia City they all landed at our house, because at that time Virginia City was just a mining town; it didn't have all these hotels and motels. Ninety percent of the people who came out to observe



the Merrill-Crowe precipitation process or to look over our mining properties, ended up in one way or another staying at our house.

Beginning during the time that I was going to school in Reno we had a house on C Street in Virginia City. It was quite a showplace, because my mother was very much interested in gardening, and my father bought the vacant lot next to our house for her. Vegetables were out, but she had the whole lot full of flowers. It was a beautiful spot. In the summer it was a riot of color: snapdragons and any kind of flowers you could name. I didn't spend all that much time there. I used to be up there in the summers, but was away at school most of the time. Then after I went to work, if I had a week's vacation I was up there. But I knew most of the girls that you ran around with. You went uptown and you went to the Crystal; it wasn't a bar then. You went to the Crystal, where you had ice cream sodas or cokes or something like that, and in the 1920s, there were dances for amusement in Virginia City.

As they opened the United Comstock mill, every time before they would put cyanide in one of the newly-finished tanks, they built stairs down into it, waxed the floor of the tank and hired a band and threw a big dance. Everybody went down there and danced until 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. The kids that I was with usually ended up at my house having breakfast of ham and eggs. Boy, if you don't think that was rough, dancing in thin-soled shoes in those bumpy old tanks with the knots and stuff in them...! But it was a lot of fun. They had about 15 or 20 of those big cyanide tanks, so you danced the summer away in a cyanide tank. It was evidently something that the United Comstock people thought of. They just thought it was a fun thing to do, and they did it. I've never heard of it ever having been done before or since.

There were other dances. The Eagles and different people would give dances, and you went to the movies. Kids weren't like they are nowadays. They didn't have to be amused every minute; they more or less made their own fun. You didn't have to be going here and there, and you didn't have to be taking dancing lessons, and you didn't have to be doing this and that and the other thing. And Mom didn't have to be ferrying you here and there. You went on shank's mare and you thought nothing of it.

When I was a kid in San Francisco, for instance, I walked about a mile-and-a-half to school and a mile-and-a-half home, and I didn't think anything of it. You saw people along the way, and you stopped and spoke to them. I lived in kind of a rich neighborhood, so most of the people we knew were the gardeners watering the yards, or the maids would come out and give you a handout or something on your way back and forth to school.

Up at Virginia City two of my friends were the Evans gal, who later married Jake Lawlor, and her sister. We used to go around together. We had one very peculiar experience: there was a very beautiful girl who was a graduate of Bryn Mawr, and she used to join us up there. We later found out that she was down on the line. I just about died, because she was a very well-bred girl. She was a natural blonde; she was tall, beautiful, and how she ever ended up in a spot like that I'll never know. Evidently, she came from a very fine family back in Boston. She was beautifully brought up and had beautiful clothes. If she had been a hundred-dollar-a-night call girl in a big city, maybe I could have understood it. But to end up on the line in Virginia City, this was something else again!

The Virginia City line was quite active in the 1920s. We lived on C Street, and B

Street was the line; we were right in back of it. On payday night they raised holy hell all night. You could hear them playing “Frankie and Johnny” and all these bawdy songs and carrying on. It was very active. The railroad depot was right down near the line, and there was a high wooden whitewashed fence from the depot so you couldn’t see the people on the line. When visitors came up the hill to go on to Virginia City the fence was supposed to protect them from the ladies on the line.

The line was a block-long row of little individual houses. I never was in any of the houses, so I don’t know just what they consisted of, but they looked like they had a kitchen and a living room and a bedroom, like small bungalows. I don’t remember who owned them at that time. At one time they were owned by a man by the name of Cafferetta, but at this particular time I don’t know who owned them. At that time they were very well kept up; they were nicely painted on the outside and they weren’t ramshackle or anything. I guess they had fairly high-class gals there. As I remember them, they were quite presentable. They used to come up to town and buy groceries and all that kind of stuff, and I cannot remember any scandals or shootings or anything like that. It was all very peaceable.

As I understand it, they had to have doctor’s examinations. They had to be licensed to operate on the line, and they had to have doctor’s certificates. Old Doc Hodgins used to do the examinations routinely on all the gals. He used to say, “Well, this is my week for the gals to come up.” He just kind of made a joke of it and everybody accepted it. It was well regulated from that point of view.

There were several physicians at Virginia City in the 1920s. There was Dr. Hodgins and Dr. Sullivan and another doctor who got laughed out of town. They had a gal up

there.... (I’m not going to mention her name, because she straightened herself out and went to Carson City and married a guy and turned out to be a very respectable person who raised her kids very nicely; they all had a nice education and they all amounted to something. So that’s why I’m not going to mention her name.) Anyway, she was always getting pregnant, and she had to go to the county hospital so people could take care of her. I think she had four out of five children out of wedlock. This doctor said, “I’m going to put an end to this. I’m going to get her on the stand and I’m going to make her name the father of her last child, and he is going to have to support this child. We are not going to do it in the county.” So, of course, the courtroom was jammed. My father said to my mother, “You stay away from there. This is no place for a lady. You stay home.” Well, she was very upset. My mother pretty well ruled the roost in certain ways, but when my father put his foot down, that was it!

Anyway, the doctor got this gal on the stand and he said, “Now I want you to tell me who the father of this child was.”

And she said, “Well, I’ll tell you, Doc, if a buzz saw hit you in the ass, would you know which tooth cut you?” Out in open court. That really rode him out of town. He came down here to Reno and set up a practice. He couldn’t take it. He was a very dignified person, and he really didn’t fit into Virginia City. He was a little on the upper-class side, and his wife was that way, too. So, of course, everybody got a big kick out of him.

Virginia City wasn’t as socially and economically segregated as big cities are. We didn’t have any slum areas or anything like that. Perhaps some of the people who lived in these houses didn’t keep them up as well as they should—they didn’t paint them on the outside or they didn’t keep them up or

something—but we didn't have divisions like in San Francisco, where you have the Nob Hill section and you have these other sections.

No part of town was considered off limits to me or members of my family—other than the line, of course. For instance, my father's birthday was on New Year's Day, when he held open house from 6:00 until 8:00 at night so that all of the different shifts of his men and their wives could come. My mother would have ham and turkey—you name it. Everybody came in, and they had a drink with my father and they ate and made merry, and that was it. And everybody was welcome—practically everybody came, outside of the women on the line. We were always brought up that the minute somebody crosses your threshold, he or she is a guest and is entitled to be treated as such. My father said if it's your worst enemy, he or she is still your guest and that's the way you act, and that's the way we were brought up. So that if one of the girls from the line had wandered in there, she'd probably have been treated just like everybody else. But, of course, they wouldn't think of doing it, and that's one of those things. But everybody came—the muckers and the mailmen and the miners and their wives and their kids—and it was just open house.

When he lived in Virginia City, my father used to have friends up from California, and they used to go out to Fallon and go duck hunting. Then when they'd come in they'd hire Indians to pick all the ducks. They used to shoot a certain amount of ducks for the Indians; they got paid for plucking, but they also got ducks. Money in those days wasn't as important to Indians as was *getting* something. Because my father shot ducks for them, we never had any trouble with the Indians picking our ducks.

When my mother first went up to Virginia City she had an Indian gal who cleaned for her

by the name of Julia. Julia was a big, fat squaw, and she adored my mother. Every time my mother got a new dress, Julia went to the store and bought the same material. She was very clever at sewing, and she came out exactly in the same dress that my mother had, which bugged my mother to no end. [laughs]

Julia had a drinking problem. About once a month she'd go out on what they used to call a real "toot". She would be picked up and taken to the jail, and they'd keep her for three or four days till she got the jail all cleaned up, and then the authorities would let her go. Then Julia would go along and work for my mother and several other people until she got on another bang. Julia was a Paiute. They were all Paiutes up there.

We used to buy pine nuts from the Indians. If you knew that an Indian was going pine-nutting you'd tell him you wanted so many pine nuts. They'd harvest them and bring them to you. Of course, they brought raw pine nuts and you had to roast them yourselves.

We didn't have live-in help, but we had people who came in and did the cleaning and did the laundry. The woman that we had cleaning and working for us the longest was an Italian lady. Her husband had died young, and she was left with two girls to raise. In those days women weren't trained to do anything, so she used to go out and work for different people, and she worked mostly for my mother.

We had one Chinese laundry, I think, but as far as I can remember, Virginia City never had any Chicanos or Negroes or anything like that. Most of the people up there were Cornish miners, and a lot of them were Irish. We never did have any race problems up there, nor were there notable religious or social problems. My father was very high in Masonry—in fact, he was a Past Patron—but

when the Catholics needed new steps in their church they came to my father, and my father took some of his carpenters off of his mining property, and they went up and furnished the lumber and built the steps and painted them, and that was it.

Women of my mother's age had bridge parties. And then all of the churches up there had guilds, and everybody belonged to the guild, and they'd go and sew for the various charities that their churches were interested in. Then they'd have bake sales for the church or for whatever organization. The women in those days prided themselves in baking. There was a great rivalry as to who made the best cakes, and when they'd have bake sales everybody would kind of put in their word ahead of time. When a cake came from so-and-so, they wanted to buy it. In my mother's day women didn't work like they do nowadays. They stayed home, and one of their prides was in being a good cook and particularly a good baker. Of course, if you made a good pie, why, you had it made.

For a while the Virginia & Truckee (V & T) Railroad was running to Virginia City, but mostly you went by automobile stages or private cars. Of course, I was young and starry-eyed and bushy-tailed at the time, and you didn't make a big thing about hitting a bump in the road or something like that. It was just part of the game. It was a rough road, too. They've straightened that road out to Virginia City quite a bit. They've taken out what they called "Dead Man's Curve" and a few things like that. In the winter sometimes it could get pretty hairy, particularly if the snow had drifted and you had to get out and shovel snow in order to get around Dead Man's Point. The snow would drift down there and you didn't have enough road to travel on. Since then they've straightened out the curves and widened the road and changed it. At one

time in the winter getting back and forth to Virginia City wasn't all that great.

San Francisco was kind of the town where you went to shop when you lived in Virginia City. You went down to buy clothes, and you went down to the theater and all that. In those days Reno had movies, but you went to San Francisco to see the plays; you went to San Francisco for the symphony; you went to San Francisco for the opera. And while you were down there you went shopping and you ate at the St. Francis or at the Palace. It was a fun thing. You went to San Francisco to have fun. My folks used to go down maybe once a month, and particularly after I was living in San Francisco they used to come down quite often. They'd let me know, and I'd get tickets to the various plays or the opera or whatever happened to be going on, and we'd just have a fun time.

Lots of times they used to come down for New Year's Eve. In those days, you had reservations at the St. Francis Hotel for New Year's Eve. They had a certain number of reservations, and you had to present your reservation at the door, and after the reservations were filled, the door was closed. Nobody was allowed to come in after that; if you wanted to leave for some reason or other, you got a ticket so you could come back. At midnight they did what they called the chef's parade, and the chefs came out in their white coats and their high hats. They each had a tray with all these beautiful spun glass creations on them, like forests or palaces or something. They turned out all the lights, except that spotlights were on the spun glass. It was just like fairyland. They did beautiful spun glass creations. I suppose that's all gone now. I haven't been to any of those big hotels for New Year's Eve in a long time. In fact, I don't want to go back, because I have some very pleasant memories, and I don't want to destroy them.

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## EMPLOYMENT AND MARRIAGE, 1923-1951

I left the University of Nevada after two semesters, and I went to the University of California in 1921. My father wanted me to become a teacher, but I took art and interior decorating and stuff like that. My father kept saying, "When are you going to switch to school teaching?"

I said, "I'm not ever going to switch to school teaching."

When I had my third year in, I got my junior certificate, and I said, "Look, it's your money, but it's my life. I've had it, because I don't intend to teach school."

So then he said, "Well, then you'll come home."

So I went up to Virginia City and I got mixed up with a guy that he didn't like, and I said, "Well, there's no way I can break up with him. The only thing you can do is send me to San Francisco to take a business course."

He said, "All right, but when you get through with your business course, you're going to come home." He didn't believe in women working in the business world. So, I doubled up on my course load at Munson's

Business School, and I finished in seven months instead of nine months. I went out and had a job before he came down to get me. I worked for Ernst and Ernst, the public accountants, for about two years, keeping their Los Angeles and San Francisco books, and keeping time for the auditors. So that was about the fourth time I was washed out of the family finances. My father said, "Don't you write home for any money. You're not going to get it."

While I was working at Ernst and Ernst, I got married for the first time...around 1923 or 1924 in California. It was a fiasco. I was only married nine months and I decided I'd had it. I just went in and got a divorce, and that was it. The fellow was from up at Vacaville. His family name was Lyon, but his folks on his mother's side were descendants of the old Spanish land grantees. They owned one of the original adobe houses that were built by the Spanish settlers. They were direct descendants, and they had beautiful memorabilia—fancy Spanish combs and that kind of stuff—which they kept in the vault all the time, so nobody



ever got to see them or use them. When I married into the family, I said, "Well, I'd like to have some of this stuff to wear." They just looked at me like, "My god, you don't wear it! You just keep it in the vault!"

When I announced my divorce, I went up to Virginia City to tell the family, and my mother was about to disown me. She said, "We've never had a divorce in the family."

And I said, "Well, there's a first time for everything. You're going to have one now." She never did quite get over that.

My dad figured that everybody had to live his own life to suit himself, and if this was something I had gotten myself into and I didn't like it, the best thing to do was to get out of it and go on with my life. I was my father's daughter rather than my mother's daughter. My mother belonged to another era, when ladies were ladies and had the vapors and broke into copious tears or fainted when something didn't suit them.

After my father brought me back to Virginia City following my divorce, he wouldn't give me enough money to go back to San Francisco. Then I came to Reno and I got a job with Thatcher and Woodburn when it was a small law firm. Mr. Woodburn's secretary was in the hospital, so I got a job with him, and I worked there six months. I was going to work long enough to get enough money to go back to California. Then I met Herb Foster, and I decided I'd stay here and marry Herb. *Then* I would get him to go back to California. Well, that didn't work out. He wasn't about to go to California. Nevada suited him very well, and if I wanted to stay married to him I was going to stay in Nevada!

Herb Foster and I were married in 1927. Herb was born on December 11, 1898, and he died Christmas Day in 1948. He taught up at Reno High School from December 1923 through December 1948. When he first went

to coach there, he was still a student at the University of Nevada. They had a coach at Reno High named Welch. He was either fired or left, and they hired Herb to come down and coach basketball, football and track that particular year. They liked him so well that the following year they hired him to teach mechanical drawing and shopwork plus his coaching. I guess he was practically the only teacher they ever got to teach in the Reno schools without teaching first out in the rural areas. (There was a rule that you had to teach in the rural areas for two years before you could come into the Reno schools and teach.)

Herb played football and basketball when he went to the University of Nevada. He played football on one of the first teams from the United States to go over to the Hawaiian Islands and play. He also played on the University of Nevada team that beat the California Wonder Team in 1921, which was considered quite a feat. Later he won a lot of state championships in tennis, and he and Douglas Busey, a local attorney, won a lot of doubles championships. When we were first married, we lived in the Butler Apartments up on Center Street. When the bed came down, you couldn't circulate around the whole apartment; it took up the whole living room. In order to get into the kitchen, you had to walk over the bed. When you're young, you don't mind those things. They didn't have any air-conditioning in the apartments, and had electric fans all over, which didn't do too much good—they just stirred up the air. And in the winter it wasn't all that warm. Later we had a duplex down on Sixth Street, which was very nice. That was a move for the better.

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My father had mined out the Flowery mine by the late 1920s, and after he left it, he

went down into California and got involved in a mining operation. It wasn't too bad a mine, but a guy who had invented what they called the Hadsaw Wheel got in with my father, and he wanted him to test the thing out. This guy had heard about my father doing all the testing for the Crowe metallurgical process at the Flowery mines, and so he wanted him to test the Hadsaw Wheel. Well, the theory was all right, but the practical side of it was not. It just didn't work. I think the worry of this thing is one of the things that killed my father—he died of a heart attack in 1932.

When I lost my father, I lost my mother and father both. My mother had led a very sheltered life, and after my father died my brother and I took over so that she was sheltered from the hard facts of life. She didn't have to cope, and couldn't have coped, and so I never went with problems to my mother. If I did, the first thing I would know, she would be having hysterics, and I was getting out the smelling salts and getting her calmed down. [laughs] It was good. I learned to solve my own problems. After my father died—and I didn't have anybody to talk things over with, and my brother was away from home—I learned to solve my own problems, which, after all, is the best way. If you get dependent on people, you're dependent on them all your lives. I have never been a really dependent person. I've always had a mind of my own and known what I wanted. It's not that I'm a controversial person; I'm not. I've always said I'd rather switch than fight, but I do know what I want and I *do* it.

Just before my father died, he leased his property to the Bradley interests. They were going to operate the mine, and he was going to act as their consultant. After my father died, they reneged. They didn't pay us; they just transferred the property from this company to that company to another company until we

completely lost title to it. We didn't even get the price of the machinery out of it. Several attorneys in Reno said, "Well, we'll take it to court on a contingency basis."

And I said, "You don't have a chance against a big company like that." You can't trace these various transfers. They had so many big companies: first they had it in the Bradley company, and then they transferred it to another company, and then it ended up in a company up in Alaska. By the time you get all through, who are you going to sue?

My brother Fred was the superintendent of the mine down there, and, of course, they fired him. They didn't want him to know what was going on; they kept telling us that the property was losing money, but we later found that that was not the case.

When my father passed away, there wasn't a lot of money left. My mother had a little money, but at that time I was supporting my husband Herb's mother and father and my mother. Between Herb and I, we had quite a burden in there.

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When I married Herb Foster, he had already been coaching and teaching at Reno High School for four years. Otis Vaughn, the principal, had hired him in 1923. Otis Vaughn was a very good administrator. He had a very composed manner, he was a very fair-minded person, and he was a very bright person. He didn't fly off the handle or get unduly excited about things. If something came up, he conducted a dignified investigation of it, and everybody told their side and were judged accordingly. He didn't prejudice people. If somebody was reported as doing something, the teacher that reported it and the pupil or whoever was involved in it all had a meeting with Mr. Vaughn and everybody told his

side. Mr. Vaughn was in no way an absentee administrator. He was a principal—first, last and always.

They had excellent teachers at Reno High School at that time. I think that Mr. Vaughn wanted Reno High School to be the best, and he tried to choose teachers that he thought would do the best job. Effie Mona Mack was one. Effie Mona Mack was a great person, but she was the type of person that if she got down on you in class, you could depend on the fact that she'd make life.... She wouldn't be unfair about passing you, but she could make life awful miserable. That's what I understand. Effie Mona and I were good friends. I liked her, and we got along very well. She was interested in sports, so she and Herb got along, but she didn't get along all that well with a lot of the teachers. Effie Mona Mack was a perfectionist, but she was not unfair. Effie could've taught up at the university, I'm sure. In fact, I think she was offered teaching jobs up there, but she was like a lot of those Reno High School teachers—they were really dedicated to Reno High School.

Mildred Klause was another fine teacher. Her nickname was Kelly Klause, and she taught commercial subjects. I'd say Kelly was about five feet, six inches tall and rather stockily built. She got the nickname Kelly from her father. He was a part owner of the Grand Cafe downtown. At that time, the Grand Cafe was *the* place to go for food, and then they had a separate bar that Mr. Klause operated.

The teachers were all very compatible. They took turns chaperoning the dances, they were active in PTA, and they had lunches together and stuff like that. I don't know how much they fraternized on the outside, but they all seemed to be very congenial in the school.

At Reno High, we didn't have any conflict between academics and athletics, because

Herb made it very clear to his students: either you make your grades or you don't play football. There was just no conflict there. He never asked a teacher to pass a kid that wasn't passing. The kids understood that Herb wasn't going to go to bat for them if they were failing a subject and they wanted make-up time or wanted to take a "special" exam. They knew they were on their own. Herb never interfered in that, and that's one of the reasons that he got along so well with all the teachers.

Once or twice when something happened, somebody was kicked off the team for breaking rules. Of course, if they didn't make their grades, or if they were caught smoking or out after hours, they were *automatically* off. Herb had strict training hours, but if somebody said they saw so-and-so out, Herb never took their word for it. He had an honor system, and he'd call a kid up and say, "So-and-so reported that you were out at 11:00 at such-and-such a place when you weren't supposed to be. Were you or weren't you?" Most kids answered truthfully. We had one kid who had been reported repeatedly. It was during basketball season, and just before the tournament he called all the kids together and he said, "This is never to leave the locker room. This is a matter that concerns only myself and the basketball players." And he said to this kid, "*You* have been reported several times as being out where you shouldn't be and drinking. Is that true?"

And this kid looked Herb right straight in the eye and he said, "No, it's not true."

Herb said, "That's all that's necessary." But from that day forward, there wasn't *one* boy on that team that spoke to that kid. They just played ball with him. He was a good ball player, and when they were on the floor they all played like a team. But in the halls or in the locker room...it finally broke him. He quit



school. They had an unwritten rule that you didn't lie to Herb.

In football Herb tried to carry all the kids that genuinely wanted to play. They had to show up for practice, and they had to show that they were genuinely interested, and if they were, he didn't cut them no matter what their level of ability. He carried them. Teenagers are at a very sensitive age in life, and any form of rejection is a serious matter. To Herb, being cut from a team was a form of rejection which he thought could have a very bad effect on the mental attitude of a teenager.

After the season was over, if we'd won or lost, Herb always said, "Well, next year we'll play again." He didn't seem to favor people. He loved kids and he loved football and he loved basketball and he loved all kinds of sports, and I don't particularly think that he had a favorite team among all those that he coached.

Herb got along fine with the sports journalists. I kept charts on all of his games. After football games or basketball games, we'd go down to the composing room at the newspaper, and I'd write up all of the notes I had. If they didn't have somebody at the game, they depended upon me to come in and give them the notes. They would write it up, but I'd give them the highlights of the game and who did what and all this kind of stuff.

Oh, we had a great rapport with the newspaper. We thought of them as boosters. The only time that I resented the newspapers—and I don't think Herb did; I think it was purely me—was when Panaca came up here and we played them in the final game of the basketball tournament and beat them. Of course, they came from a small town, and the fact that they even got in the semi-finals was commendable. The paper came out in big banner headlines: "Panaca is defeated

by Reno"—not "Reno defeats..." but "Panaca loses to Reno," or something like that. And the night when they were presenting the trophies, they made a great big fuss about this Panaca team. They turned around and said, "Now we award the championship trophy to Reno High School." Period. About that time I was fuming. That was the only time that I ever resented the people that were in charge of the tournament or the newspapers.

I think football was kind of Herb's main love. I think it was his favorite sport. It takes more strategy and more stamina to play football than it does basketball. Basketball takes a certain amount of strategy, but if you don't have a good strategist on your football team, look out—you haven't got anything. And you can't fake in football. Either you've got it, or you haven't. I think that's the reason that it appealed to him more, because it's more of a demanding, precise game.

I think Herb majored in math at the university. About two or three years after we were married, Professor Haseman came after him and wanted him to come back to the university and get his master's in math. He had sort of a mechanical mind, but, of course, athletics were always his first love. When Professor E. Otis Vaughn left the principalship at Reno High School, they offered it to Herb. And he said to me, "What do you think?"

I said, Look, it's your life, and most of your time is spent working. If you're happy where you're working, you're happy. And if you're not happy where you're working, that's it."

And he said, "Well, it means \$1,000 a year more salary."

I said, "That doesn't enter into it. Are you going to be happy as a principal?"

He said, "No I'm not. I want to coach." So that was that. He didn't want administrative work.

It was mostly the police work that he didn't like about administration: you have to ride herd on your students and teachers and so forth. When he coached, he took his kids on faith. And then sitting at a desk 10 to 12 hours a day didn't appeal to Herb. He was too active for that. Of course, when he taught mechanical drawing or shop, he wasn't sitting at a desk. He was walking around and supervising the kids and stuff like that. To be chained to a desk for 10 or 12 hours a day, plus the police work that went into administrative work, just didn't appeal to Herb.

He was one of the founders of the Reno Tennis Club. Tennis was the thing that Herb played. He wasn't a golfer. He never could get interested in golf for some reason or other, and tennis was his own individual sport. Many people were playing tennis in Reno, and about five or six of them got together and decided they would have a tennis club. They used to play Sacramento and different towns in California. Oh, I used to hate those Sacramento trips. It used to be so hot down there. How they could get out and play tennis, I don't know.

Herb worked several times during the summer, and he went to the University of California summer school four or five times. Once he worked for Caterpillar Tractor Company, and one time he worked for a service station. He didn't always work in the summers. A lot of times he just played tennis and painted the house or did the yard or something like that. Teaching plus coaching takes an awful lot out of you. When you're a teacher, by the time the end of the day comes, you're pretty well drained. You have to be on your toes all the time, dealing with different personalities, and by the time the end of the day comes, you've pretty well had it. Well, by the time the end of the day came, Herb was into coaching. So, by the

time summer came, he was ready for a little R and R.

We were both interested in the theater, and we used to go on long weekends to San Francisco and go to the various plays. Of course, during the football season if we had a free weekend, we'd go down to some of the football games. My brother was over in Colorado one summer, and we went over to visit him. When the Olympic games were on in Los Angeles, we drove down and stayed for about a month. Herb just about saw everything in the Olympic Games.

Herb was the first president of the Reno 20-30 Club, which is people from 20 to 30 years old who are supposedly fodder for the Rotary Club. In other words, they belong to the 20-30 and then they get into Rotary. Herb then graduated into Rotary, and he was a member of the Rotary until he died.

Herb was a close friend with Doug Busey; he was a close friend with Hoyt Martin; he was a close friend of George "Molly" Malone, who became a United States Senator from Nevada. He belonged to the American Legion and he used to work with Molly Malone and the American Legion. Bert Alison, who had the diesel dealership, was a good friend of his. And Mr. Vaughn was a good friend; we didn't fraternize particularly outside of school, but he was a good friend of Herb's. Heinie Cooper and some of those boys that used to be boosters of Herb's teams were all friends. The boosters used to buy uniforms for them and stuff like that.

Herb was English. He was very reserved, and sort of a complex character. He wasn't given to great outbursts of temper or anything like that, and, of course, he thought I was completely nuts because I wasn't reserved enough. I used to say, "Well, why in the hell did you marry me? You knew how I was when you married me." I could walk into a room

with 50 people, and a half hour later I'd be calling all of them by their first name. Herb could walk in there and he would go and sit down and observe people and eventually get to know them, but in a very reserved sort of way. He didn't have that spontaneous, boisterous nature, I guess you'd call it, like I have. Herb was also a great reader. He wasn't a novel reader; he was a reader of instructive books. He liked philosophy and engineering books or architectural books or something that he could learn from.

Before Herb passed away on Christmas day, 1948, there was little indication that his health was not good. I think he had had a heart attack, but I'm not sure. It was just before Christmas and we were going to go out Christmas calling, and he said, "You know, I don't feel so well. I don't think I'll go Christmas calling."

And I said, "Well, that's not like you."

And he said, "I know it; it isn't. But I'm just not going to go." And he didn't. He didn't feel well for about two days, and then he just snapped out of it. That was the only time that I could think that he might have been on the verge of an attack, or maybe he had a mild heart attack.

Herb died of a massive coronary thrombosis, which meant that the clot never got beyond the shoulder, it was so massive. Nowadays they could tell by your blood that you had to do something about your cholesterol, or this or that or the other thing. But in those days, he just seemed to be fine and that was it.

When he passed away there was an article on the front page of the paper that suggested that Herb could've become the head football coach at the University of Nevada, but I don't think Herb was ever offered that job. Nevada was kind of funny then; it was not loyal to its own people. They kept wanting to bring

outside names in to do things, and I doubt that Herb was ever offered that job. It seems to me that if he had been offered the job, he would have taken it.

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After leaving Thatcher and Woodburn I worked for a great many years for the Internal Revenue Service in Reno. I was an appointee under the Republicans. Then when the Democrats came in about 1933, I thought, "I better get out of here before they fire me." That was the spoils system. Now it's all civil service, but in those days a lot of the jobs were appointive, and the Internal Revenue office was still one of the hangovers where the director picked his favorite people—supporters of the Democratic party and the president.

I had known George Thatcher and Bill Woodburn and George Wingfield for a long time. All of those people were business friends of my father. When he needed legal work, they did it for him. If he needed a contract drawn up, or something like that, they took care of it for him. In 1933, right after I left the Internal Revenue Service job, Thatcher and Woodburn helped me get a job with the Alexander Copeland Company as a secretary.

The Alexander Copeland Company turned out to be a bucket shop—that's where they peddle worthless stock. I worked for Alexander Copeland and a guy by the name of Searles. Searles's girlfriend was Thelma Todd, the movie star. That was in the heyday of the Riverside Hotel, and he lived at the Riverside. I worked there for about a year, and they closed him down. Then I was subpoenaed to go up to Seattle to testify against them. I had a ball up there. All the mining people were up there, and I was wine and dine and had a great time.

When I get nervous, I get laryngitis, and the night before I was supposed to testify, I couldn't talk. I said, "My gosh, I can't go on the stand."

A friend said, "I'll fix you up." And so he got me some Kimmel [schnapps] and honey to drink.

When we got ready to leave, I said, "Something's wrong with me. I know my pocketbook is over there, but my hand wants to go over here." I said, "I think I've got 24-hour polio."

My friend said, "You'll be all right."

When we got up to leave, the door was over here, but I wanted to walk this way. Now, I wasn't staggering. My mind was perfectly clear and everything. He got me back to the hotel, and we had a big Svenska [Swede] maid there, and he said, "Put her under a hot shower and then a cold one."

I said, "I don't like cold showers."

He said to the Svenska, "Go ahead then and get her a pot of hot coffee." So, she did and gave me the black coffee and I went to bed, and I got up the next morning and I felt great. So this guy calls me and he said, "How do you feel?"

And I said, "Fine. Why?"

He said, "Do you know what was the matter with you last night?"

And I said, "No. What?"

He said, "You were drunk."

I said, "Drunk! I've never been drunk in my life. I don't drink."

He said, "What do you think Kimmel is?"

He said, "It's 90 proof."

And I said, "You mean you got me drunk?"

He said, "It cured your laryngitis, didn't it?"

So I thought, "Oh, my gosh."

I don't chew gum, but I got some gum and I was chewing this gum and I was

nervous anyway. Both of the attorneys said to me, "Now, be careful. This judge is very strict and very ornery and he'll cut you down to size."

I wasn't nervous enough you, know! I got up on the stand and I forgot about the gum. I guess I was chewing gum like it was going out of style, and the judge leaned over to me and said, "Mrs. Foster..."

And I said, "Yes, your honor."

He said, "Do you mind getting rid of your gum?"

And I said, "Not if you promise to save it for me." He picked up a piece of paper, and he handed it to me and I put the gum on it and he put it on his desk. There was a loud titter in the courtroom, and he banged his gavel.

He said, "If there are any more demonstrations in this courtroom, the court will be cleared."

So, of course, that did it. I got up and I testified. The ice was broken, and then...with me and my gift of gab, I gave all my testimony and everything. When I got ready to leave, the judge leaned over and said, "Didn't you forget something?"

"Oh," I said, "my gum."

So, he handed me the paper and I picked up the gum and put it in my mouth. By this time everybody was wanting to laugh, but they didn't dare. The attorney said to me afterwards, "What in the *hell* did you do to that judge?"

I said, "Why?"

He said, "He's never been known to perform a human act in his life. When you said to him, 'Not if you promise to save it for me,' I thought he'd fine you for contempt of court."

"Well," I said, "he didn't. He was very nice about it; he saved it for me."

And they said, "Well, we've seen everything now."

After the bucket shop operation collapsed, I went to work for the Nevada Land and Livestock Association. I worked for them for a while, and then I worked for the United States Treasury Department. When the government had all those projects such as WPA, they had a special branch of the Treasury set up that did all the auditing of the accounts. One of my ex-bosses in the Internal Revenue office had one of the top jobs in the Treasury office. I went to work for him and helped him set up the office and get the thing going. When the war broke out in 1941 I was still working for the Treasury Department. They had transferred the office down to San Francisco, and they transferred me with it to make the transition. I was living in a hotel in San Francisco the day that Pearl Harbor was bombed. We had a blackout, and I can remember that first night I was lying in bed and I could hear these airplanes *way* up, and the sirens were going and everything. They hadn't identified the planes; they didn't know what they were. So I thought, "Well, any minute we're going to be bombed." You see, I was down there alone, and my husband and family were up here in Reno. But it turned out that they were friendly planes. We never did get bombed in San Francisco, but they were very much worried about it.

Well, after a while I got tired of working in the San Francisco Treasury office, so I just resigned and came back to Reno. During World War II, I worked for awhile in Reno for Isbell Construction Company, doing the hiring. Isbell employed a lot of Indians to rake the hot asphalt and do different jobs like that, which was hard to get white people to do. The local Indians who worked for Isbell lived in houses, but a lot of his Indians lived in trailers, because they followed the construction crews. They had funny little trailer houses; they weren't anything extra. They cooked on

little gasoline stoves, and gasoline and other things were rationed during the war. Since part of my job was to look after the Indians and help them get along, I used to have to go and get their gasoline rations for their stoves and vehicles.

One time there was a huge windstorm while they were fixing the roof on the shop out there. It was about three stories high. Someone yelled, "Heads up!" Whenever you hear heads up, you run away from the building. One of the Indians, Charlie Sam, stood right there, and the ladder came down and bopped him on the head. So they all came to me, and here was blood spurting out, and I got one of these pressure bandages and put it on his head.

I called up old Dr. Stadtherr; Dr. Stadtherr was very good. I said, "Dr. Stadtherr, I got a wounded Indian here. Can you take care of him?"

He said, "Send him down."

So I got one of the pickup boys to take him down to Dr. Stadtherr, and Dr. Stadtherr called me and said, "He's got a slight concussion, and he should go in the hospital, but he *won't* go in the hospital."

I said, "Put him on the phone."

I said, "Look, Charlie, you have to go in the hospital two or three days on account of your head."

"You say it's OK?"

I said, "Yes, it's OK." Three days went by and Dr. Stadtherr calls me, and he said, "You know that goddamn Indian you sent me...."

And I said, "Yes."

He said, "He likes it so well in the hospital he won't leave, and I can't discharge him."

In the meantime a telegram came. Charlie Sam's family were from around Bishop, California, but I don't know what tribe they belonged to down there. The telegram said that his cousin had died, and so I said to



the pickup boy, "Take this telegram up. Some of these Indians can read and some of them can't. Just take up the telegram and read it to him and hand it to him."

So Charlie Sam came down. He had to go to Bishop for the cousin's funeral. He had a pickup truck, so I had to go down to get him a ration of gasoline to drive to Bishop. Charlie Hill was in charge of gas rationing in Reno, and he was on the mezzanine floor of the old Golden Hotel. There were no company vehicles available to go downtown, so I had to go in Charlie Sam's truck. Well, his favorite color was turquoise, and he had a tarp over the back of his truck painted turquoise. He had on a turquoise shirt, a bandage on his head and a big Stetson and a big turquoise buckle—all dressed up to go down and get the rationing. We went down and parked. Sitting there was a very snazzy-looking convertible with the top down and a beautiful girl in white and an Army lieutenant all spiffed up in his uniform. He looks at me and he said to this girl, "You see, I told you the white women out here marry the Indians."

I turned around and I said, "Yes, they do. And besides, I've got six kids. Do you want to make something out of it?"

He said, "No, lady."

I said, "After this, when you start talking about people, you should know we're not deaf."

So then we went down. I had Charlie Sam by the hand, leading him up to the mezzanine. We got the gas and everything, but what I didn't know was that his cousin had not died in Bishop. His cousin had died in Gabbs, where Isbell was running a project. So, he went out to Gabbs and picked up a compressor that the company needed in Reno, picked up the dead cousin, and drove to Bishop. When he got back, I said, "How did it go, Charlie?"

He said, "We had an awful time. You know, they put the compressor in the truck. The compressor got loose, and when we got down to Bishop, we couldn't get my cousin out."

It came out that he'd taken his dead cousin down there with the compressor. The compressor had shifted, and they had to get a crane to lift the compressor out so they could get the dead cousin out to bury him.

When I used to do the hiring for Isbell they had a Caterpillar operator by the name of Chief Bender; he was an Indian. When I'd call up the union hall I'd say, "Look, don't send this Chief Bender, because by the time Chief Bender gets out here we're not going to have a job."

And the girl would say, "Well, we have to take them as they come along next on the list."

I would say, "Well, if Chief Bender is next on the list, forget it until he's hired and then send us somebody else, because we won't have Chief Bender."

Louie Brazzonavich was an Indian who had been in the service, and he got shot through the ear. He had a hole in his earlobe where the bullet went right through it. Louie drove a truck, and no matter where I was, when Louie saw me, he would call out, "Hi, Mrs. Foster! Hi, Mrs. Foster!" Everybody wondered who in the hell I was that I had all these Indian friends.

There was an older Indian couple who were up in their seventies. We were hiring one day when the woman came in the office and said, "I go to Bishop."

I said, "Yes, I know you went to Bishop."

She said, "I come back, and you know what? My husband, that old fool, he got a young one in my bed."

All these people were standing around waiting to be hired. I said, "Look, we'll talk about it later."

"No, we talk about it now."

"What are you going to do?"

"Get the young one out of my house!"

I'm telling you!

The woman couldn't write, and another time she came in and I filled out a form for her and everything, and she put her X on it. I witnessed it and had somebody else witness it. I rustled around in my desk and got an envelope and addressed it for her. She looked at it, and she handed it back to me: "No gottem stamp."

This fellow was standing there. He said, "You would try and cheat her!"

"Well," I said, "I don't have a stamp. It's the company's stamp."

And he said, "Well, goddamn it, I don't care whose stamp it is, put a stamp on her letter!"

The Indians got along fine at Isbell, but they were like children; they were my babies. No matter what they wanted, they came to me.

At Isbell, the laborers worked until about 4:00, and I worked until 6:00. We had one good-looking Indian who would go in and get all dressed up, then he would come sit at my desk. He wouldn't say anything; he'd just stare at me. So I said to Wilmer Isbell, "What in the hell are you going to do about this Indian?"

"Well, he said, 'he likes you.'"

And I said, "I know. But he's annoying me. He doesn't say anything. He just comes in there, and for an hour until I get ready to go home he will just sit and stare at me." Everybody kidded the life out of me about it. I had an awful time getting rid of him.

I can't remember any Indians working in the mines. Since I've been in the Nevada Mining Association, I don't recall any Indians being hired by mining companies. Now, a lot of them work in the mines in Arizona, because in Arizona they have mines on the

reservation, and in their contract they have to hire so many Indians to work. Bill Johnson was a consultant for one of the big outfits down in Arizona. I said to him one time, "Do any of the Indians work?"

He said, "It's part of the contract. You have to hire a percentage of Indians to work on the project."

And I said, "Whether they're good or not?"

He said, "Whether they're good or not. You try to get the pick of the crop; regardless, you hire them."

When I left Isbell, I went to work for the Savings Bonds Division. I was still working for them years later when I ran into Roy Hardy one day. He wanted me to work for the Nevada Mining Association, which was being reorganized following the death of its executive secretary.

My father and Roy Hardy had been partners in the early 1920s, and when I met him, he was involved with the Getchell mine. Before World War II my brother was the general superintendent out at the Getchell mine. He worked under Roy Hardy for George Wingfield until he joined the Seabees in World War II. When he came back from the War he worked for Newmont mining until his death in 1952.

My father, my grandfather, and my brother and I had been around mining all my life, so I just decided I'd had enough of the Saving Division and I'd go to work for the Nevada Mining Association.

Everybody said, "You're crazy. With the government, you get paid holidays and paid sick leave and you eventually get a pension."

And I said, "I don't live my life that way. I want my life to be interesting. So if I work for the Mining Association, and I don't get a pension and I don't get any sick leave or anything, it's *tough*." But this is how it was.





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## THE LOU GORDON YEARS

It was the death of Henry Rives that precipitated the reorganization of the mining association. Mr. Rives had been the executive secretary of the Nevada Mine Operators Association for 25 years prior to his death in 1952. When the new executive secretary took over, the association was reorganized and renamed the Nevada Mining Association, Incorporated (NMA).

I didn't know Mr. Rives well, but I knew him, and I knew the girl who worked for him. Henry Rives didn't seem to do much work for the mining association. His secretary used to have plenty of time on her hands; they didn't appear to do much work in the office. She used to wash and set her hair and do her fingernails and all that kind of stuff. She didn't make any bones about it.

Henry Rives was a pompous man, and he was heavysset and rather loud. That was it: he was Henry Rives, take it or leave it. He had a great alliance with Harold's Club—he used to go over there every afternoon, and by the time he got back to the office, he wasn't in the mood to work. When he was on the Nevada Tax

Commission, I always suspected (and a lot of other people suspected) that he was being paid by Harold's Club—but I don't know that; it was just a suspicion. His secretary thought the same thing, but she didn't talk too much about Henry Rives.

[Casino gambling was legalized in Nevada in 1931. In its early years legal supervision of the various establishments was strictly a local matter, with police and sheriff's offices responsible for collecting any fees, suppressing cheating and maintaining order. By the end of World War II, the gambling industry had become important enough in the state's economy to warrant statewide regulation. In 1945 the Nevada legislature charged the State Tax Commission with the responsibility for inspecting and licensing all casinos, and collecting fees and taxes from them.

The commissioners of the State Tax Commission were drawn from the basic sectors of Nevada's economy: mining, livestock, land, agriculture and business. Henry Rives represented mining on the

commission from 1927 until 1952. There was no commissioner from the gambling industry, but there is reason to believe that Mr. Rives accepted emoluments to act as gambling's advocate on the commission from 1945 to 1952. (See especially the Robbins E. Cahill oral history.)—Ed.]

I think Henry Rives did a good job as far as representing mining on the Tax Commission, but he pretty well rested on his laurels as far as going out and getting new members or developing any kind of programs for the mining association. They didn't have a bulletin; they didn't have a newsletter or anything like that. Major mines just belonged to the association and they paid their dues, and that was it. Nowadays we have environmental committees and we have education committees and we have industrial committees. Everybody gets active in all of these matters, for the common interests of the mining industry as a whole. There was nothing like that when Mr. Rives ran it. He just did a little politicking during the legislature, and if there were any bills that were against the mining industry, naturally he was over there and lobbied against them. I don't know that he could do anything for politicians, but the mining association had the most powerful mining companies as members, and Mr. Rives could just go over there and say, "Well, Kennecott doesn't like this bill."

Kennecott was a pretty powerful entity in the state at that time; Kennecott was a very wealthy and a very active company, and they were very civic minded. They did a lot for the state. They gave scholarships to students, and they gave summer employment to students, and I would say politically that they were pretty powerful. They didn't wear their politics on their sleeve, but it was there. If Henry Rives and the Mine Operators Association got into

a financial spot, Kennecott bailed him out. If he ran short of money, old Jack Kinnear [John C. Kinnear] who was John Kinnear, Jr.'s, father, would turn a certain amount of money over to the association kitty, aside from the dues that Kennecott paid. *That* I know, because when I took over the records of the mining association, I could see where every once in a while it had happened. And I was told that when Henry Rives got into financial difficulties and didn't have enough money to pay salaries or something, Kennecott would donate some money to the association.

Mr. Rives did not keep the mining association finances separate from his own. He had the whole thing in his own bank account, and after he died, we had an awful time getting that straightened out. I audited those books until I was nearly blind, until we finally got what should have been the mining association's share of the money, as best we could figure out. Fortunately, Thatcher and Woodburn at that time were sort of legal advisors to the association through Wingfield and Hardy, and they got it straightened out. We didn't have to go to court or anything like that. It would have been a mess.

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When Henry Rives died on December 1, 1952 the Mine Operators Association just kind of went into limbo. The office was vacant for several months. Roy Hardy was in there off and on, because he was trying to put the association together again. I think Mr. Hardy was the man who was principally responsible for selecting Lou Gordon to succeed Henry Rives as executive secretary, but Mr. Hardy didn't talk. He was the strong, silent type. It was like pulling nails to get anything out of him. They had been friends for years, and Lou Gordon was working for the RFC

[Reconstruction Finance Corporation] at that time.

Roy Hardy was closely associated with George Wingfield, because his wife's sister was married to George Wingfield. Roy Hardy was out at the Getchell mine and Thatcher and Woodburn were always the attorneys for the Getchell, and they were all more or less interrelated. Of course, Thatcher and Woodburn were *the* attorneys in Reno at that time. When Roy Hardy worked for the Getchell mine he was a director of the Nevada Mining Association, and he was president of the Nevada Mining Association several times. He didn't come into the association as a consultant until after he retired from Getchell—Getchell just closed down. He went into strictly consulting work, and that's when he came into the association as a consultant; had an office in there. Roy Hardy did not have any position in the Mine Operators Association when Henry Rives was the executive secretary, except that he did sit on the board of directors in later years.

Lou Gordon and I were hired simultaneously. Well, he was in there a couple of weeks or so before I was, because I would never quit a job without giving two weeks' notice. The Savings Bonds Division was very unhappy. They sent a man out from Washington to try and talk me out of it. Who knows if I did the right thing by going to the Nevada Mining Association? I don't look back. The die is cast, and that's it. I was bored to death with the whole savings bond thing. I like a job that is challenging, and boy, when I picked the Mining Association, I picked the right thing! It's never been dull.

The board of directors had to approve our hiring. At that time they had nine directors, and it had to be a consensus of the directors. I was offered a salary about equal to what I was making at the Savings Bond Division, except

I didn't have any fringe benefits. I started at the Nevada Mining Association at a very low salary. It took me a long time to work up to a decent salary in that association, and I've seen it through good times and bad. The gold mines had been shut down during the war, and after the war was over the government stopped subsidizing tungsten, and then all of the tungsten mines closed. The Mining Association wasn't all that flush in 1953, because they had lost all their tungsten people. Of course, most of the silver mines in this state were underground mines, and with the price of silver, it didn't pay to operate underground mines.

I could tell by the books when I went in there that nothing had been done to develop any new mining companies. After Lou Gordon and I got in there we got Anaconda and different mining companies to come in and join the association. I guess the board of directors had tried to steer Rives in the right direction, but they only had meetings once a year, and Rives was more or less on his own. But I think I was only with the NMA for about two or three months when they decided they should have what they call affiliate members—vendors of supplies and equipment and services to the Mining Association—and also individual members. At that time, associate members could join for \$5 a year, and affiliate members, I think, were \$35 a year. Since then they've done a lot of restructuring. They've cut out affiliate members, and they have what they call sponsoring members. And what we used to call regular members, they now call sustaining members—they're the operating mines. Also some vendors are in that category, because they want to be active in the affairs of mining, and if they belong in that category, they can be on the board of directors.

Lou Gordon had the backing of Roy Hardy, but he was the principal force in rejuvenating the mining association. When he wanted to put in affiliate members and associate members, Mr. Hardy was a little skeptical. He said, "I don't know whether you're going to get any people in those categories or not." Well, it kind of snowballed, and I've forgotten how many associate members we have now, but we still have around 300 or 400 members, I guess, in that category. Mining attracts people.

When Lou Gordon and I went in there the mining association wasn't very affluent. After we started to develop memberships, we changed the name to the Nevada Mining Association. Then our attorneys advised us that we better incorporate it, because if we didn't, if there was ever a suit brought against the Mining Association, it could be brought against the individual directors, as well. So then we incorporated.

Thatcher and Woodburn drew up our articles of incorporation and the bylaws. I think they had had some association with the Nevada Mine Operators Association all the way back to its beginning in 1912. George Wingfield was interested in mining, and he and Roy Hardy and Thatcher and Woodburn were all kind of in it together. I think that Thatcher and Woodburn always took care of legal matters for the association. We never paid a fee to them. In fact, we've never paid any legal fees at all, because all of the different mining companies have been very generous, and if we needed legal work done, they authorized us to use their attorneys. In later years other firms have assisted us in some legal matters.

Lou Gordon was like a lot of mining people: he was rich today and poor tomorrow. When he went to work for the Reconstruction Finance Corporation he didn't have any

money. He had interest in a lot of mines that weren't operating and that he kept afloat by getting the assessment work done and everything; but as far as having any liquid assets, he didn't. He then had to rely on the RFC and then, later, the Nevada Mining Association for his income, and he had a few very good friends who helped him keep afloat.

Lou Gordon was an odd man. He was an alcoholic, but he was a charming person. He was a great raconteur. He could quote whole passages from very famous works; he was widely and well read; and he was a very charming person. When he was drinking, no. How people could be such...a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, I'll never know. When he was drinking, he was foulmouthed and loud and impossible. And when he was sober, he was very meticulous and very polished and very bright. Henry Rives was an alcoholic also, but Rives and Gordon had absolutely nothing in common. Henry Rives was never charming at his *best* hour. When Mr. Gordon got to drinking too much, he was all right unless he got in an argument or somebody prodded him or something. If they left him alone he was all right, but if he got in an argument or something displeased him, he could be not a nice person. Not that he beat anybody up or anything like that, but his language....

Lou Gordon brought a lot of enthusiasm and willpower to putting the Mining Association on its feet, to get it into a going, operating organization. He put a lot of effort into that, and he did go out and visit the various mines. Mr. Gordon started a newsletter that we put out once a month, so that vendors and the associate members got something for their membership dues. He wrote very well, and we did a lot of research, and we had a lot of news in those newsletters. There was a lot of mining news and there was a lot of other news and they were interesting.

Lou Gordon had a lot of political influence in Carson City. He knew Jeff Springmeyer. In fact, when the legislature was in session, he used to take a room and stay over down in Carson City. He knew a lot of those legislators, and he was a lobbying influence in his own way. He could be very charming; he could be very knowledgeable; he could be most persuasive.

In representing the interests of the mining industry in Carson City, Mr. Gordon never tried to beat anybody over the head. They'd go in the afternoon and have a couple of drinks or go out to dinner or something like that. He was not the type of person to get bombastic toward anybody if he had a point to make, and when he was dealing with the legislators, he could be very suave and very persuasive. Of course, there never was much of a legislative threat to mining. We had a few threats in the legislature, but there was nothing like there is now.

Even with the expanded membership under Mr. Gordon, the large mine operators were still the governing body of the association. The vendors and the individual members had nothing to say about the policies or the way the Mining Association was run. They were just members, and that was it. In order to become a director you had to represent a sustaining member, and those are principally operating mines. (There have been some that were not, like Sierra Chemical Company, Cashman Equipment, and Pioneer Equipment. Mr. Cashman and Mr. Evasovic have both been directors of the association, and are directors now.)

Roy Hardy had *a lot* of influence in the Mining Association, and he had a lot of influence with Lou Gordon. Hardy was a very level-headed, even-tempered person. Lou Gordon was a volatile, fly-off-the-handle person, and Mr. Hardy was his ballast. He

was the guy that sort of kept him in line, kept him from going off on a tangent. He would talk to him and get him settled down, and they'd work things out. Of course, Roy Hardy was a very well-respected man in this state. He was big in mining; he was a regent at the University of Nevada for many, many years; and he was married to one of the Thoma girls. (Dr. Thoma was a very prominent man in the state of Nevada.)

Roy wasn't too much of a lobbyist. Mostly, he and Gordon talked things over. Gordon did most of the lobbying. Roy was friendly with Fred Settelmeyer, the senator from Minden, and he'd go over and talk to some of the legislators once in a while, but as far as being an active lobbyist, no. Mr. Settelmeyer was one of the most famous legislators when I first went to work at the NMA. He was never married, and he and his sister, Erma, used to come together to the sessions of the legislature and entertain together.

Mr. Settelmeyer was chairman of some very influential committees. His favorite expression about some bill that somebody didn't want passed was, "Well, it's in my ass pocket and I don't think it's going to get out." And it was so funny coming from him, because he looked like such a very prim person, who would cross all of his *t*'s and dot his *i*'s and everything. But he was a delightful person, and a very smart person, too.

Fred Settelmeyer was a cattleman and a rancher, but he was one of the legislators that I've known who was primarily interested in the good of the state of Nevada. If something was good for mining, he was for it; if something was good for ranching, he was for it; if something was good for something else, he was for it. Fred Settelmeyer was the type of legislator that they should all be: interested primarily in the state of Nevada, not in a



particular industry. Being a big cattleman and rancher, he could have just concentrated on that and said, "To hell with the mining industry or with gaming or everything else." But Fred wasn't like that.

One of the sources of influence for Henry Rives had been his position on the Nevada Tax Commission. Lou Gordon was supposed to be appointed to succeed him, but before Gordon became the NMA executive secretary, Governor Charles Russell put Walter Larsh in as an interim commissioner. When Lou Gordon was appointed executive secretary, Walter Larsh was supposed to resign, but Larsh liked it, and he refused to resign. So there wasn't very good blood between Larsh and Gordon. Mr. Gordon never did get to sit on the Tax Commission, which is just as well. I don't think anybody who is a head person in the Mining Association belongs on the Tax Commission.

Walter Larsh did consult regularly with the Nevada Mining Association. He had to if he was to know what the mining industry wanted or what they were doing. He was a very amicable person; he wasn't at all abrasive, and he wasn't an alcoholic. He had been a mining executive, the head of what I think they called Copper Mines, Incorporated, over in White Pine County. Kennecott bought them out, and at the time that Kennecott bought them out, Larsh retired and went over to Carson City to live. That's when they appointed him to the Tax Commission for an interim period until somebody was appointed executive secretary of the Mining Association.

Lou Gordon and Governor Russell were friends. Charles Russell was a good governor. Like Fred Settelmeyer, he was interested in things that benefitted the state of Nevada—he was a friend of the mining industry; he was a friend of the cattle industry; he was a friend to the gaming industry. If you have a

governor in there, he'd better be an all-around governor, but not all of them have been. I think Governor Richard Bryan is a little iffy, but he doesn't express it.

After Lou Gordon took over, the NMA had its good periods and its lean periods, but we always paid salaries, and we always managed to pay the rent and do the things that we were supposed to do. There were times when we weren't all that affluent. If the mining companies weren't prospering, they didn't pay high dues. It's like everything else.

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Mr. Gordon did the *Newsletter* himself. [Publication of the NMA *Newsletter*, a monthly, commenced in April, 1953. In 1977 its name was changed to the *Bulletin*, and frequency of publication became erratic under the administration of NMA executive secretary Robert Warren.—Ed.] He dictated it to me and I took it down in shorthand. I didn't take over doing the *Newsletter* until Mr. Gordon became sick during the last year of his life. Then when Mr. Gemmill came in as executive secretary, he just said, "It's still your responsibility." Mr. Gemmill didn't want any part of it, so I just continued writing it until Bob Warren succeeded Paul Gemmill, and then he took it over.

The *Newsletter* was developed because when Mr. Gordon came in, he and Mr. Hardy decided that in order to keep up the broad membership's interest in mining, they should offer regular news about what was going on. The membership got a copy of the *Newsletter* once a month, telling what was going on in the mining industry and about people in the mining industry and various things like that. After all, you can't expect people to belong to some kind of an association or club and not give them anything.

Then Mr. Hardy and Mr. Gordon decided to have annual conferences. Of course, they had always had board of directors' meetings, but after Mr. Gordon came aboard, they decided to have an annual meeting that all of the members could attend and participate in. That, again, to give them something for their membership dues, and so they knew what was going on.

I also used to make up quite a voluminous financial report that went out to the members so that they knew what was happening to their money, which is something they never knew before. It was a professional job: it was a trial balance and an operating statement and a balance sheet and then the dues of all types of members, and after we got going, I compared the dues from the previous year to the dues of the current year, and I used to set up a budget so that people knew how much money we were going to have to operate in the coming year. I did that up until 1987 when the NMA decided to farm out the bookkeeping. My budget was fairly successful. It didn't deviate too much from what I estimated and what we actually spent.

As a boss, Mr. Gordon was a very temperamental person... extremely temperamental. He had a volatile disposition, but he rarely exercised it around me. When he'd start flaring up, I'd just say, "Look, you go close the door and calm down, and I'll stay in my office and you stay in yours."

Another thing was that he didn't like the clatter of the typewriter. He would say, "Do you have to type so fast? It annoys me."

I said, "I only know one way to type." So when we were in the office he always kept his door closed. There were only the two of us there then. Of course, that's all changed now.

As regards the writing of the *Newsletter*, Mr. Gordon, like most lawyers and men, procrastinated until about the last week, and

then I was typing furiously to type it up in rough draft and get it edited. Of course, in those days we didn't send it out to be printed. We did it all on a mimeograph machine. So after it was all proofread and everything, then I had to put it on stencils and proofread it again. When we first went in there, we had a hand-crank stencil machine, and then later, as the volume of business got bigger, we did get an electric mimeograph machine. I always used to have an extra girl come in to crank the thing out and staple it together and do the envelopes and all that sort of thing. They called it the *Newsletter* then; later they called it the *Bulletin*, when Mr. Warren came in. Then he had it professionally printed with pictures and all that sort of stuff.

I'm a pretty good speller and a pretty good English student, and I always tried to be very meticulous about structure and spelling. No good secretary takes something the way it's directly dictated. You reword it or rephrase it; I have always done that, and I think most good secretaries do that. I don't know about nowadays. Things have changed so much that half of these secretaries don't know how to spell or use good sentence structure. Of course, I had an advantage. I had three years of college, and in high school I took four years of Latin. Latin is a terrific background, not only for spelling, but for the *meaning* of words. I've always felt that when they dropped Latin out of the schools it was a big mistake.

Each month's edition had information about the individual mines and operators who were members. We tried to get the individual mines to write things up, but we didn't succeed. It was more or less sleuthing or footwork on our part. Then I'd call them up to verify that what we were writing was true. You can't always depend on the newspapers or the trade magazines to be accurate, so I

always used to call up to verify things so that we didn't make any horrible mistakes.

I used to try to get the different professors up at the University of Nevada's Mackay School of Mines to write an article each month for the *Newsletter*. I figured not only would it be informative, but it would also be a good advertisement for the Mackay School of Mines. But I didn't succeed there too well. Once in a while I'd get an article, but very seldom. I used to call up Vernon Scheid, dean of the School of Mines, and he'd say, "Well, I assigned so-and-so to do it. Didn't he do it?"

And I said, "No, he didn't do it." It got to be such a hassle that I thought, "Well, if they don't want to write an article or..." I thought different metallurgical or mining information would be of interest to the general public, and also we would have given credit to the professor who wrote it, and to the Mackay School of Mines.

In later years, all of these mines have hired publicity agents. The publicity agents send news releases to the papers and the radio stations and all of the news media, and we used to get those releases. But that's a fairly recent thing. In the old days the mining companies were very smug; they just thought that mining was mining, and that was that. Mining also used to be very modest in what they said about scholarships or building schools or stuff like that. They just felt that they didn't want to toot their own horns. Well, they were wrong. They should have, and now they do. Like Round Mountain—they've done tremendous things out there. They've built schools and they've bussed kids into Tonopah to go to high school, and when Anaconda was up in Tonopah, they did things for the schools. They built roads and they enlarged the water system there, and.... They *should* publicize this.

In the *Newsletter* there were regularly excerpts from newspapers, from other

journals, from government documents and so forth. I used to read all the trade magazines and newspapers, and I used to mark the trade magazines. I used to clip the newspapers, and I did it up until the day I left. I did it for whoever was working on the *Bulletin*. We tried to screen it so that all of the items we put in were legitimate mining companies, and tried not to get involved with the fly-by-nights.

As far as any process of selecting items for inclusion in the *Newsletter* went, it was like flying: I did it by the seat of my pants. You get a *feel* for these things; it's something that you have an instinct for, that you think the public will be interested in and that will be of some help to the mining industry. Of course, a lot of the government things that I put in were more or less to alert people what the government was trying to do to them. [laughs]

Many of the *Newsletters* had a section toward the end called "Notes of Interest." That was mostly my doing. As I went along I would find things that weren't really stories, but were of interest. I would jot them down and make a reference to where I got them and then kind of combine the whole thing. It was just a general conglomerate of things that might be of interest to people—things that weren't justified as being written up as an entire article.

We have had very few labor problems in mining in Nevada. I think all of the years I was with the NMA, the Anaconda people went on strike once, and I think Kennecott went on strike once—not from a local point of view, but because the *national* people went out, and when the *national* union went out, it got down into the lower echelons. I don't think that most of the mining people in Nevada ever struck of their own volition. However, we included a lot of news about organized labor



outside Nevada in the *Newsletter*. Nevada has been for many years a “right-to-work” state. When we put a lot of these labor things in the *Newsletter* it was to alert the various mining companies to what the *issues* might be on striking. It wasn’t so much to emphasize the striking, but to alert the various mining companies as to what issues were being brought up by strikers in other parts of the country. There’s always an apprehension of something like that spreading. You know how terrorism is: it starts one place, and then it kind of snowballs and goes on someplace else.

Partially due to concern about possible union demands, I would get all of the contracts from the different mining companies, and boil them down and put them on stencils: wage rates, fringe benefits, pensions, hospitalization programs—everything. That was information for our members, and it took a lot of time. That wage rate business kind of fell through the cracks about four or five years ago, I guess. It just got to the point where I got so darned busy, and you used to have to bug people time and time again to get their wage rates. There were a lot of little things that had to be ironed out. And when I finally got the information, then I finally got it into the Wage Data Schedule. It just got to be too much of a hassle.

About three years ago one of the mining companies picked up the responsibility. We send the questionnaires out from the office, but they are condensing the information received. I used to do it by various companies, but now they’re just condensing it—not naming any companies, and just putting average rates.

The reason we started this in the 1950s was the unions. Unions were like everybody else: they were so damned greedy, and they were very secretive. When new mining companies started up, they had to have some

basis for dealing with these unions. The unions practically put them out of business, they tried to get such high wages. Companies had to know what was going on. Of course, Nevada is now a right-to-work state, and we don’t have too many unions in the mines anymore.

When I started keeping such records it was clear that wages varied between different localities. White Pine County—Kennecott—paid higher wages than some of the other people did, and then some of the operations down in Henderson paid a little higher wages than they did maybe in Battle Mountain. It was kind of a local thing. It’s gotten now so that it’s a little more uniform. I would say Pioche and down around that neighborhood were just kind of limping along, and they weren’t paying too good a wage. It all gradually began to level out over the years.

When we got these non-union mine operators, they all wanted union wages. That was another thing that made me stop: the non-union people didn’t want to give me their wages. They didn’t want the unions to know what they were paying, but they wanted me to put out a wage schedule that showed what all the union mines were paying. That began recently when Round Mountain and all these big outfits started and didn’t have any union contracts.

We didn’t have anything to do with recording and reporting safety records. That was strictly the state mine inspector. If you see a state mining inspector’s report, he lists all the fatalities and the accidents and everything in his annual report.

When Mr. Rives was executive secretary, they had a dues schedule based on the number of employees a mine had and the hours they worked and stuff like that. I don’t remember the exact formula. (Now they’ve changed it all around.) But Kennecott just paid a flat

\$1,000, and they didn't do it on the basis of employees and hours worked. They just paid a flat thousand. I don't know why Rives did that. Later, after we got in there and Anaconda started mining in Nevada, they paid on the regular dues schedule, and it was well over \$1,000 a month. Even before they began active mining in the state, Anaconda had joined the NMA. There's a good reason for that. For instance, the Mining Association could steer them on how to deal with the Net Proceeds of Mines Law and the different taxes in the state. The Mining Association could be very helpful to a new company coming in, and we have been. If a new mining company was starting up, and they didn't belong to the association, they couldn't get the wage rates information I was producing. There were a lot of things that they weren't privileged to have, so if they joined the Mining Association there were a lot of doors opened for them that they didn't have opened otherwise.

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During the 1950s at the NMA the only departure from routine was during the sessions of the legislature. We used to write a lot of letters to the legislators, and we used to make a lot of resolutions to be presented to the legislature. It was a busier time than usual during the sessions of the legislature because the different companies who were members of the Nevada Mining Association came and said we should do this and we should do that. So we wrote certain resolutions and we wrote a lot of letters to individual members, and Mr. Gordon did a lot of testifying before a lot of the committees.

Between sessions of the legislature, there was a normal office routine at the NMA. Mr. Gordon dictated the *Newsletter*, and I transcribed it and ran it through the stencil

machine and saw that it was gotten out. I billed all the members for their dues. I wrote the letters, and I wrote letters of solicitation, soliciting new members. I kept the books of the association. I sent an operating statement and a trial balance and a list of all the new members every month to the directors so that they knew what the financial status of the association was, and who the members were that had joined. If they knew somebody who should be a member, they would tell us and we would solicit them for membership.

The NMA office was not an easy office to work in. It was a very, very busy office, and I was the only gal that worked there for many years. When you do all that, you don't have time to go to Carson City and find out what the big shots are doing. And you could care less. During the legislative sessions, I used to go to work at 6:30 in the morning and work till 7:00 or 8:00 at night. I worked Saturdays; I worked Sundays.

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A couple of years after I joined the Nevada Mining Association there was a great deal of excitement in the state about the possibility of discovering oil in Nevada. There were a number of exploratory wells drilled. But the oil companies did not communicate with the Nevada Mining Association in the same way as Anaconda had prior to its coming into the state. The oil companies mostly had connections with the university. The university did all the data on oil, and we got all of our information about the oil companies through the university. The petroleum industry has a powerful lobby of their own. They don't need the Mining Association. A few of them joined the association as vendors, but I can't remember any of them joining as regular sustaining members.

The Mining Association was very pleased about the discovery of oil. The more activity you have in the mining industry (and, of course, oil is related to the mining industry in its way) the better off the state is. The Mining Association was very much interested in oil, and in fact we quoted in the *Newsletter* a lot of the statistics that were put out by the Nevada Bureau of Mines about oil.

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In 1954 Senator Patrick McCarran died. McCarran was a strong friend of the mining industry and the Nevada Mining Association. Alan Bible was appointed to take his place. Bible frankly admitted that he didn't know anything about mining, and he depended upon us to keep him informed about it. From the Nevada mining point of view he was very diligent about protecting the mining industry. All we had to do was wire him about something and he was very active in protecting the mining interests.

When Alan Bible went to Washington, he took with him as his secretary Eva Adams, who had been McCarran's right-hand gal. Bible was pretty smart to pick up Eva. He didn't have any experience back in Washington, and you take a senator or a congressman that has a good secretary, and she can take a lot of the load off of him and even advise him at times. The secretaries get around, and they talk among other secretaries, and they know a lot of things that prove to be valuable to the senators or congressmen that they wouldn't know otherwise. And Eva was a very bright person. I think she went to Georgetown and got her law degree. I first met Eva Adams through Lou Gordon. She, McCarran and Hardy were all friendly. Bonnie Hardy, who was Roy Hardy's wife, was the daughter of Dr. Thoma, and Dr. Thoma delivered Eva Adams.

So, of course, there was always a very strong friendship there.

Eva was a very smart gal; Eva was a diplomat from her toes to the top of her head. She could talk to somebody and extract a lot of information from them without people realizing what was going on. She did it in a very conversational, gentle way. Eva knew the people who counted in the state—like Norman Biltz and George Wingfield. Eva knew all the right people, and it didn't matter if they were on this side of the political tracks or on the other side. Eva was just a very charming, attractive person.

The Nevada Mining Association maintained contact with Miss Adams in her capacity as McCarran's and Bible's secretary. When Alan Bible first went back to Washington, two or three times we sent something to Eva, and Eva wrote back and said, "Please send everything to Senator Bible. *He* is the senator from Nevada." And she said, "Send me a copy so that I know what's going on." Eva never overstepped her bounds, and that's another way that Eva was diplomatic. Eva could have been a big power on her own, because she'd worked back there for so long and knew so many people and knew the ropes, but she wasn't like that. She worked for the senator, and that was it.

Senator George Malone was also a great friend of the mining industry. Malone was in engineering, and that was related work. Walter Baring and Howard Cannon were always friends of the mining industry. Howard wasn't as *active* in the mining industry, but I will say this for Howard Cannon: if we called something to his attention that we wanted him to work on, he was very cooperative.

The only Nevada politician who was never very interested in mining was Paul Laxalt; but he never opposed mining, and if we needed his out-and-out support in

something, he did support it. After all, he was a sheep man and a farmer. It's just in the last ten years, I think, that the Mining Association has made a great effort to get together with the cattle people and the sheep people to try to work together amicably. They are after the same thing. The cattle people want to graze on the public land, and the miners want to mine on the public land. They more or less have gotten together, and they sort of formed a coalition to try and get along with each other and present a united front on the use of the public domain.

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As the value of ore produced in Nevada dropped sharply in the late 1950s, the NMA had some lean years. Salaries weren't cut back, but they certainly *weren't raised*. And we didn't buy any extra equipment or do anything like that. We never had a problem with morale, but it's like every other business—if you have a lean year, you tighten your belt and hope for better times.

During Mr. Gordon's tenure, there was a Western Mining Conference formed. It was a coalition of miners in all the western states. All the heads of the mining associations belonged, and then a lot of the leading mining companies belonged. They would formulate what the mining industry needed and what the governor should work for in their particular state. Then they would send one or two delegates to the Western Governors Conference to present their bill of rights, or what they thought should be done in each state for the mining industry. That at one time was quite a powerful structure. The people who started that and formed it were Nevadans. There was a man by the name of Mr. Williston who was head man for the McDermitt mercury mine. Williston was a

very influential person in getting this started. The thing started in Nevada and just kind of grew from there.

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I think Lou Gordon's major accomplishment as executive secretary was making people more aware of the importance of mining to society. Lou Gordon conducted a one-man public relations office. He personally entertained senators and assemblymen and met with the various mining officials. He went out and went over their properties, and he was a good public relations man. He was well-read, he could quote passages from books, he had a brilliant mind, and he was a great raconteur.

During his 12 years as executive secretary, the thing that bugged Mr. Gordon most was the creeping wilderness issue. He was always very much opposed to wilderness of any kind. He felt that wilderness was a threat. He thought that conservationists were reaching too far, and at that time they hadn't hardly reached! One of the bills that appeared in Congress during the time that Mr. Gordon was still executive secretary was the wilderness bill in 1961. You didn't mention the wilderness bill to him. It just about gave him a stroke! [laughs] He always used to call the wilderness advocates *bird-watchers*.

At the time that he was in, the Nevada press was very cooperative. Before all the bird-watchers got in their two bits worth, the papers were very *simpatico* toward mining, because they knew what mining did for the small communities. A lot of these small communities wouldn't exist without mining.

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## THE PAUL GEMMILL YEARS

During Mr. Gordon's last year, 1964, when he was ill, I ran the office for about four or five months. There wasn't anybody else. I would write letters and things like that, but I went out to see Mr. Gordon every night while he was sick and did him the courtesy of letting him sign the letters and see what had been done. If he wanted to change them, he could change them. Of course, toward the end it didn't make any difference.

After he died there wasn't anybody in the office except me, so I cranked out the *Newsletter* and billed all the people and got the dues in and kept the books, and all the sort of things that you do. There was never any formal arrangement with the board of directors for my managing the Nevada Mining Association during that period when there was no executive director. They just expected me to do it, is all. They expected me to carry on the office, and I carried on the office until such time as they appointed a new executive secretary.

After Mr. Gordon's death, some of the directors discussed promoting me to

executive secretary. I said, "There's no way I'm going to be an executive secretary. The day you appoint me executive secretary, you've got my resignation on the line." I said, "No woman...", and that was years ago, "...can be executive secretary of the Nevada Mining Association and be effective. It's not in the cards. Mining people don't accept women." Even today, although they hire women, I don't know that they are accepted. Mining and construction people are accepting women, but I think a lot of it is with tongue in cheek. I still think today that no woman could be effective as executive director of the Mining Association. I think it takes a man to be effective in that job.

I think women have places in the world, and I think that they should exploit the things that they're fitted to do and let it go at that. Mining is a strenuous job, and I think that the women that are suited for that sort of thing are *way* in the minority.

Following Lou Gordon's death in 1964, the board of directors decided that the executive secretary (and the title is now



executive director) would be hired on a yearly contract. Mr. Gordon didn't have a contract—just sort of an understanding that he was in there for life. Of course, when a man is dying, you can't go in there and say, "Sorry, you can't do anything for the association. We're through with you." So now, at every annual meeting they reappoint the executive director and the consultants. In that way, if for some reason they don't want to reappoint them or they have some grievance, it's understood that they don't reappoint them.

Mr. Paul Gemmill was appointed to succeed Lou Gordon, and I never will forget when he came in. Mr. Lloyd from Henderson was there, and I don't know how this subject came up, but Mr. Gemmill said to Mr. Lloyd, "You know what this gal told me? If there's a mistake made in the office, it's to be blamed on her. Secretaries are always presumed to be dumb, but she doesn't want to work for any dumb bosses." [laughs] And that's always been my theory.

Paul Gemmill had an entirely different disposition from Lou Gordon. While Mr. Gordon was volatile and expressive and talked with his hands and got excited about things, Mr. Gemmill had a very calm, easygoing disposition. But, like all people who are of that nature, if he got mad, he got mad! I never saw it, but I knew that he could get mad if he wanted to. He more or less took things in stride. He was very easygoing, and he was very effective as a lobbyist because he was a good listener. I don't think he was any better a lobbyist than Lou Gordon, though. They were two different types; they approached the thing in two different ways, but I think they were equally effective. Mr. Gemmill made it a point to go out and visit the different mining companies and become acquainted with all the mines. He is a mining engineer and also had been active in the mining business right

up until the time he came into the Mining Association. I don't know whether he does any consulting work or not now, but when he first got out of the association he did quite a bit of consulting work, and he has an interest in the Prince mine down in Pioche.

Mr. Gemmill had the same goals as Mr. Gordon. Everybody who has ever been in the Mining Association is interested in promoting mining, and the Mining Association was the tool by which they hoped to accomplish this. When Gemmill came in, I wrote the *Newsletter*, but he read the articles and approved them or changed them. It was Mr. Gemmill's decision to have me write the *Newsletter*. He didn't want any part of it. He could write a good speech, but writing was not a natural thing with him. It was a struggle, and he just didn't want to be bothered struggling through the *Newsletter*. He thought he had more important things to do, and I agreed with him—he did. So, I wrote the *Newsletter*, and that was it.

Other than that, I continued in the routine established by Mr. Gordon. I kept the books and I wrote the letters and did the usual office routine—answered the phone and sent out bills for membership and sent out invitations for people to become members and all that. I did all that general office work.

Paul Gemmill was friends with some of the different mining people. At the time of Lou Gordon's death, Mr. Gemmill's property in Pioche was closed down, and they approached him about succeeding Mr. Gordon. I don't think he was too crazy about the job in the first place. I think he was talked into it more than anything, because he was a mining man and not really a pencil pusher.

Northern Nevada was an entirely new ball game to Paul Gemmill. He had done a little lobbying in Carson City over the years, but he had never lived or mined in northern

Nevada. All of his operations were either in southern Nevada or over in Utah, but in the mining business there was never that sense of separation between northern and southern Nevada that is found in state politics. They all knew that they were either going to hang together or hang separately, and they chose to hang together. We didn't have that problem.

His first year, Mr. Gemmill started to try to build up the membership of the association. If we heard of a new mining company starting up, I had a standard form letter that we wrote to invite them to come in, and I sent them a copy of the *Newsletter*. I was also doing a regular breakdown of the wage rates for the mining industry in Nevada, and nobody but our members were entitled to have it. It was quite a drawing card, because when new people were setting up it gave them an idea what the wages and the fringe benefits were.

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I can't remember how long Walter Larsh was the mining representative on the Tax Commission, but a man named William Newman succeeded him. Although there had been some controversy surrounding the fact that Lou Gordon was not made mining's representative on the Tax Commission, there never was any question about whether or not Mr. Gemmill should have been appointed to it when William Newman resigned. I think over a period of years the directors of the Association began to realize that this was not a position that was good for the Nevada Mining Association as a non-profit organization. They shouldn't have to be in a position to vote whether or not somebody was entitled to tax relief. It could have been very controversial; some of the rulings could have had a backlash. People could have said, "Well, this guy voted

so-and-so, and he is at the Nevada Mining Association. And if that's the way the Nevada Mining Association feels, we don't belong to it."

I knew Bill Newman for a long time. He played basketball and football, and I think he ran track for Herb when he was in high school. Later on he worked up at the Getchell mine when my brother was there. When my brother got out of the Seabees, he went to work for Newmont over at Ouray, Colorado, and Bill Newman went to work for him over there for a while.

Nevada is a small state. Everybody knows everybody. I know that Bill Newman tried to get the NMA executive secretary's job when he worked for the Tax Commission; that was when Lou Gordon died and Mr. Gemmill became the executive secretary. Bill Newman had his nose a little out of joint, because he had applied for that job. He got pretty miffed because he didn't get it, but a lot of the mining people didn't want him. One of the reasons they didn't want him was because he was sitting on the Tax Commission. He was *not* popular on the Tax Commission, either. I don't know what happened at the Tax Commission or why, but many mining people didn't want him as executive secretary of the mining association on account of his record at the Tax Commission. A lot of the mining people came to me and said they didn't want Bill Newman, and I said, "Don't tell me about it. Tell the board of directors. I don't have anything to do about appointing the executive secretary."

And they said, "Well, you know all the directors and one thing and another...."

And I said, "Look, I just work here. I'm one of the peons. If you don't want somebody appointed here, go to the directors and tell them you don't want him." I think that's when the directors went out and found Paul

Gemmill. Because I think a lot of them didn't want Bill Newman in there.

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Gemmill kept a pretty good finger on what was going on during the sessions of the legislature, and he kept all the mining companies advised. When he thought it was necessary, he asked them to bring people in to testify on particular bills, and I think he had a very good rapport with all the legislators. In those years, we didn't have too much onerous legislation like we have now. The mining industry was in good shape, but wasn't all that prosperous. When you get prosperity in this state, the state gets greedy and they want part of the action, but in those days the legislators and the mining people and the cattle people got along pretty well.

Copper was good then and tungsten was good then, but gold was nothing. Gold didn't come into its own until later years. Of course, lead and zinc were down and silver was down. I think that Mr. Gemmill did the very best he could under the circumstances. There wasn't much he could do. If you don't have operating mines, you can't build up a mining association.

Governor Grant Sawyer was interested in upgrading the mining industry, because he knew that mining was very important to the state of Nevada, particularly the smaller towns that depended on it. They had then the Western Governors' Mining Advisory Board, and the mining people had what they called the Western Governor's Mining Council. Mr. Gemmill went with Governor Sawyer to all the Western Governor's conferences. He was more or less an advisor to him. He helped him write his speeches, and he advised him on the mining problems. The Governor's Mining Advisory Council used to send

*written* recommendations to the governors of the states, and Governor Sawyer felt that there should be some personal contact in there.

Governor Sawyer was a very knowledgeable and a very personable governor. He was vivacious, he wanted to know about everything, and he was active in a lot of places where a lot of governors weren't all that active—one of them was mining. He asked Mr. Gemmill to go on trips with him and be his advisor and help him with his speeches, which Mr. Gemmill did. Mr. Sawyer frankly confessed that he didn't know anything about mining. He had never been involved in mining...all he knew was that there was mining in the state, and he knew that it was important to the state, but he didn't know technicalities. He didn't want to make a fool of himself by trying to write a speech about something he didn't know anything about.

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In 1966 the value of mining production in Nevada went up again. That renewed prosperity, and it affected what was going on in the Nevada Mining Association. We had more members, and I think that was the year they raised the dues—we got more money in. I don't remember if we on the staff got any raises, and I don't know that we upgraded our spending any. We were putting out the *Newsletter*; we were doing publicity work; and we were lobbying in Carson City. It was business as usual.

Another thing that happened in 1966 was the big move of the NMA office from 206 North Virginia Street to the First Interstate Bank building. The bank wanted us out; they wanted the space. We were about the only ones that were left in there at that time. Most of that building was leased by Harold's Club



for offices. The place that we had was the front office, and the back was where they had all their posting machines and stuff like that. They needed the room, and they wanted us to get out of there, so then we moved down to the First Interstate Bank building. We moved down there on the sixth floor, and then the bank decided they wanted that. We then moved onto the seventh, and they decided they wanted that room. And now we're on the ninth floor. I said to Mr. Hesse, "I suppose the next move, you'll pitch a tent out on the roof of the garage and move us out there."

When we were in that building at 206 North Virginia Street, we were in there with a lot of other old Nevada firms. Woodburn and Thatcher were in there, too, and George Wingfield's office, the Noble Getchell operation.... The offices in FIB are much superior to 206 North Virginia. That was an old, old building. It was a very interesting building. Wingfield had his offices on the second floor, and he had a regular woodburning fireplace in his office.

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The Riverside Hotel was a big thing here through the 1960s, and they had all the big names here at that time. But Duke Ellington would never bring his band here, because the Riverside and the finer dining places would not serve black people. When the Mills Brothers came, they got around it because some of the white people would ask them to dinner. There was nothing that the hotel could do about refusing to serve a black if he was a guest of a prominent person in Reno. The blacks didn't care; when they weren't invited to dinner, they had their dinner served up in their room. But Duke Ellington wouldn't come here. He said, "No

way. If my people aren't good enough to eat in the dining room, they aren't good enough to entertain the people in Reno."

Back 20 years ago, when the government first started this business about industry having to hire minorities, Mr. Birch out at Anaconda got some black boys to come out there and work. He said, "All they had to do was come out and lean on a shovel. I didn't give a damn, just so we had so many blacks working out there."

Well, they didn't like it. In Reno they had a Chinese club where the blacks could go, and then they had a strictly black club run by a man named Bailey, but out in Yerington they didn't have any contacts with black people. There weren't any black women out there; there weren't any black whores out there; and, of course, they felt strange going into the bars to drink. I don't think there was any discrimination shown, but they just didn't feel at home, so we couldn't keep them on the job. Mr. Birch said, "Hell, what do you do, kidnap them? You'd have to hogtie them to keep them there, because they weren't happy."

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Mining has always been in trouble with the government. They've always wanted to regulate mining safety. Now they have what they call MSHA (Mine Safety and Health Administration). It's very controversial in this state, because the state mine inspector goes around and makes an inspection, then MSHA comes around and makes an inspection. One recommends on thing and one recommends the other. It's a nuisance. As a matter of fact on two or three different occasions the mining companies have tried to do away with the state mine inspector's office and let the federal government do it entirely. But so far they're under dual regulation.

When federal regulation first became a big issue in the 1960s, mining supported the state. We never wanted the federal government in here any more than we needed to have them in here, and they had quite a few meetings. About 1970 we got a state mine inspector who got into office on a fluke. Mervin J. Gallagher had been the state mine inspector since the 1940s, and he was very good inspector. He was running for office, and he was really considered a shoo-in. I don't think he had any opposition, but he died very suddenly, which threw the election up for grabs.

At that time, the general public voted for state mine inspector. Phil Hulse and Harry Springer ran for the vacant office, and Mr. Hulse tried to do some fancy footwork that backfired. The result was that Springer got elected, which was one of the biggest fiascos that ever happened in the mining industry. That was the time when all the national safety boards were being set up, and they were holding hearings in the various states for the states to present their point of view and present what the state mine inspectors were doing and sort of try and coordinate national safety with the state boards. Springer refused to attend any of the meetings, and he refused to send any representative of the state mining board. Of course, the various mining companies sent their safety people, but the Nevada state mine inspector was not represented. I'm sure he knew his inadequacy. He couldn't have done too much in the way of testimony, but he wouldn't send any representative, and he had some good deputies who were left over from Gallagher's regime who could have gone and presented Nevada's viewpoint from the state mine inspector's report. But Springer refused to have anything to do with it, and nobody could budge him.

At that time when they were bickering, they were trying to keep the responsibility for state mine safety under the state mine inspector, with more or less supervision from MSHA. The state mine inspectors were fighting for jurisdiction in the state with supervision from these government agencies. What the government agencies were trying to do, and which they succeeded in doing, was to put their own representatives in here.

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The federal government was saying in 1971 and 1972 was that they wanted to close the public lands to indiscriminate prospecting. They wanted to require that someone give evidence of mineral deposits before they allowed them a patent on that land; they had to prove that it was economically feasible to mine that particular land. Of course, there's a lot of exploration that has to be done before you can prove that something is economically feasible to mine, and that's what the great argument hinged on. With any of the big open pit mines there are hundreds of tons of what they call overburden that they have to remove before they even get to the ore. While you're removing overburden, you can't prove that the product is economically feasible to mine. It hit the non-metallics worse than it hit the metallics—people who were going to mine marble or gypsum or stuff like that.

We've always encouraged the small miners. They have formed their own organization, but we have always worked closely with them, and we have always encouraged them to become part of the Nevada Mining Association. We've encouraged them to attend hearings, and along the line we guide them a little bit. When the requirement for locating a claim on a map in the recorder's office came up in the legislature [see the 1972 Nevada Mining

Claim Law] small miners would go in and rant and rave. Instead of sitting down and making a logical presentation, they'd get in there and they'd get very emotional about the thing. This turns off a committee. They want facts and figures. They don't want somebody to get up there and throw their arms around and say, "This is ridiculous and we can't do it." Now the small miners and prospectors have calmed down, and they work with us on different committees. We've given joint testimony, and we more or less have coordinated the thing.

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In 1977, about 13 years after he had been appointed executive director, Paul Gemmill left the Nevada Mining Association. Personal and health reasons led to his decision to leave. He had had a heart attack, and another thing was that his wife was from Salt Lake City and she wanted to move back. And he just had had it. It wasn't that he didn't enjoy working for the Mining Association and all that, he just figured he'd served his time and the time had come for him to quit and pursue his own interests. He still has some mining interests down in Pioche, and after he left he did a lot of private work for different people.



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## ROBERT WARREN, ROD HIGGINS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

During the interval of a couple of months between executive secretaries I just ran the office the best I could. I answered all the questions I could and took care of as many things as I could. At the time that Paul Gemmill was put in, there were only about two or three different applicants, and they were not favorably considered. Gemmill was more or less the unanimous choice. But after Gemmill left there were quite a few applications. I made it very clear that I didn't want to see any of the applications for the executive secretary position. I didn't want to have anything to do with it, and so I didn't open applications. If something came in that looked like an application, I sent it directly to the board of directors. I said, "If you choose somebody I can get along with, I'll stay, and if you choose somebody I can't get along with, goodbye. It's as simple as that. I don't want any part of choosing him."

For two or three months after Paul Gemmill resigned, the board of directors was interviewing people for the job. Mr. Robert Warren had been interested in that job for a

number of years. When Mr. Gemmill was still in office, he interviewed for the job in case Mr. Gemmill should leave, and he was quite interested in it. Finally, he won out.

Warren and Gemmill were entirely different personalities. Mr. Gemmill was sort of laid back and sort of easygoing, and Warren was more of an aggressive type of person. That used to get him into trouble, because he was too aggressive at times. He meant well, and he was sincere in all of his endeavors, but he just got a little carried away sometimes. He did work hard to build up the association, and he went out of his way to involve the small miners and the cattlemen and the sheep men. He tried to make a unit of all these people, so that they would stand together in particular matters of legislation. He worked very hard at it, and he was quite successful.

The head of the NMA had the title of executive secretary until Mr. Warren decided that secretaries were secretaries and that he was not one! That's when they changed the name to executive director. However, there were no immediate changes in the way that

the office was run or in my responsibilities. Of course, as the association was building up, there was a lot more work. At that time we started hiring more part-time help. They would come in in the afternoons and work, but up until then I had been alone in the office. (During Mr. Gemmill's time we did have a gal that would come in in the afternoon to help with the *Newsletter*.)

Mr. Warren was primarily a newspaper man, and he thought that a mimeographed *Newsletter* didn't have enough prestige. He wanted a professional look, which was good. He took over writing all the articles, and we would transcribe them. Then he would edit them and correct them. They were done on a certain type of paper so that they could be sent out to the printer, and they were ready to be photographed. But we did all the legwork on it. I wrote some of the articles for Mr. Warren, but he did the predominant work on it. In 1977 he changed the name of the *Newsletter* to the *Bulletin*.

Up through the time that Mr. Gemmill was executive secretary, the board of directors said they did not want any editorializing in the *Newsletter*. They wanted it strictly news about this company or that company, or about different promotions of employees or whatever. And you could report on bills and other governmental actions. When Mr. Warren came in, that changed. He did a lot of editorializing in his *Bulletin*. Once in a while he got off on the wrong foot and editorialized the wrong thing, and that was one of the things that kind of got him in hot water. I think he kind of sold the idea to the board of directors, and they decided that maybe the Nevada Mining Association should express opinions about certain things, which we hadn't done in the past. I felt that the *Bulletin* should be strictly news items for the people that were getting it, and I thought that it had

gone too much the other way. I still think that we should present the facts. All right, so we have an opinion now and then, but not constantly!

Also, all of the statistical evaluations of the Nevada mining industry that I did were dropped from the *Bulletin*. And I used to report on all the oil findings and the production of oil, and he dropped all that. I don't know why he did that. I wasn't too happy about it. Anyway, I continued to collect data about the Nevada mining industry from the industry reports. I have a lot of files in there that I collected on various mining companies.

If the membership had any opinion on the changes to the *Newsletter*, they didn't express it to me. It was strictly a matter between the board of directors and Warren. I *did* mention to two or three of the directors that I didn't like it, but after all, I'm a peon. They're not going to agree with me about my boss. I just said to two or three of them that I thought we were making a mistake in publicly lobbying the way we were, which was what it amounted to. Fifteen years ago we would have lost our non-profit standing, because lobbying was a no-no for a non-profit organization.

Dean Kerr was a Kennecott man who came in as president of the NMA board of directors at about the time that Warren was hired. He initiated a vigorous membership drive, but the letters were all written out of the Nevada Mining Association office. He did write some letters from Kennecott to back us up as a matter of prestige. After all, he was president and he wanted to make a showing as president. He was in as president for a year, and then they reappointed him for another half year. Usually they served for one term and that was it.

Mr. Kerr thought that if some company had 100 members, they should have an extra

representative at the annual meetings as a spokesman—proportional representation. That idea never did work out too well. Of course, Mr. Rod Higgins, Warren's successor, has re-written the bylaws, and I don't know whether they kept that particular item in or whether they threw that out.

Mr. Kerr was successful in attracting new members partially because a lot of copper mines were starting up, and some tungsten mines were starting up, and he just decided we should go all out to get these new members. Of course, they paid dues on a proportional basis—so much a year for each employee. They have changed that whole system since. Now they base it on the number of employees and the net proceeds of mines—it's a very complicated formula.

To launch the membership drive we wrote to all of our sustaining members to get a list of their chief suppliers. Then we used our members' names and wrote the suppliers and said that so-and-so has suggested that your company should become a member of the association. That was what really started the suppliers rolling. I think they finally realized that they were a part of the mining industry. If you didn't have a healthy mining industry, you didn't have a healthy suppliers industry. Of course, now our suppliers as of this date are very active in the association, and a lot of them have become sustaining members. Many of them are on committees, and they have a suppliers committee.

We also went out after new mining companies to become members. In the early years of the association Kennecott dominated. They were the biggest contributors, and they were the biggest influence. As the number of members began to increase, they still played an important role, but they weren't quite as dominating as they had been. Actually, they never dominated in the sense that you

consider *dominating*. They were always prominent in the association, but they never lorded it over anybody. They were just a part of the association; they didn't feel that they were all that great.

During Bob Warren's regime we started what we called annual conferences. They are open to everybody—associate members or sponsoring members; anybody who is a member of the association is entitled to go. Before that we used to have meetings, but they were different kinds of meetings. We used to have them at the Riverside Hotel and other Reno hotels, and people would come in and we'd have speakers. Every year one of the mining companies would host a cocktail party. Everybody paid for the dinner, and they'd have entertainment. Then when mining got so depressed, that fell by the wayside. Mr. Warren revived the tradition, but in a different way, in that it was held out in the various towns, and it included tours to the various mines, which was a big selling point. A lot of people have never seen a mine, you know. All it cost them was the registration fee and \$15; they didn't have to stay for the Saturday luncheon or the Saturday banquet. They could just go Friday and go on the mine tour and get a free lunch, and then they could go on their way if they wanted to. It has been a big drawing card.

Mining, to most people, is kind of glamorous. They just think you go out and dig a hole and find some gold and you've got it made. They don't know that it costs millions of dollars to develop a mine before you even get five cents out of it. So the Mining Association has tried to develop an education program in the schools to educate younger children as to what mining is all about. They have a manual that's called "Mining and Me," and they've done a lot. Every year they have a seminar that they hold for teachers,



and they take them to the mines. They have a set-up with the school board where the teachers that take this course get a certain amount of credit for it. It's statewide, and a lot of the mining companies will sponsor teachers to go. They will pay their expenses, and the different mining companies donate money for the banquets and cocktail parties. They put on a very concentrated program for teachers. Victor Botts, and his wife, Jeannie, were the ones who really started that education program. She was the one who went to Carson City and got permission to put this course in the schools for the children sometime in the late 1970s. Victor Botts was on the board of directors, and he was from the McDermitt mine.

Dan Harper was the one who really expanded the association's education program. Jeannie left, and he was on the education committee, and I guess they just appointed him as chairman. Mr. Harper used to go out and collect different rock samples, and they made up specimen boxes. Each youngster got a specimen box with a sample of tungsten ore and gold ore and lead ore and zinc ore, etc. Dan Harper's the type of person who either does something well or he doesn't do it at all. He's a very thorough person. He's with the Pinson mine out in Winnemucca.

Up to date, as far as I know, the education effort has not been too successful in Washoe County. I don't know whether they didn't push it, or.... But they had success down in Las Vegas. One year, when they had the American Mining Congress down there, a Catholic school had this mining education program in there. Mr. Warren took the youngsters over to the American Mining Congress, and he took them all through the exhibits so they could see all the machinery. They wrote letters and they drew pictures of the different things they'd seen. One guy got a little sort of a tin thing

and made a helmet out of it to show that they had worn this helmet. I kept all the letters at the Nevada Mining Association office. The kids had a ball, and they didn't mind telling about it.

In 1987 the Nevada Mining Association put on a short course up at the University of Nevada. I think it was a two-week course, and school teachers got credit for taking it. They took actual courses there, and they had a field course in connection with this course that they gave.

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The Mining Association was never *not* a busy office, not at any time that I worked there. Under Mr. Warren there was a little bit less hands-on management, however. We were left to our own initiative a bit more often. We used to try and get him to telephone the office in regular periods so that if something came up that he should know about, we could tell him about it. Then, we always had the number over at the legislature so that they could page him. So there was a lot of telephoning going on. He would call in, and then maybe we'd spend two or three hours on the phone calling our various members, telling them about the progress on a bill and what he thought they should do with it—send in telegrams or send in representatives to hearings.

In 1979 and 1980 the publication of the *Bulletin* became very erratic. We never could pin Warren down to writing the darned thing, and he wouldn't let anybody else write it. He just got involved in so many different things that he said he didn't have time to write the *Bulletin*. One of the things that intervened was the session of the state legislature. Maybe he'd come into the office once a week, but he lived in Carson City and he spent all his time there during the sessions of the legislature.



He claimed at that time he was too busy to write a bulletin, and he didn't delegate it to anybody else, so it didn't get written.

The associate members really only got two things out of belonging to the Mining Association: one was the *Bulletin*, and the other was the privilege of going to conferences. Of course, when they didn't get the *Bulletin*, they just weren't too happy about it. We got all these letters, and we had some resignations over it and some protests about it. Then we'd have to write back and explain that due to the session of the legislature, the *Bulletin* was not being published for a time. It just didn't go over too well. Mr. Warren got some reaction from the board of directors, and so he tried to pick it up. And then he put it out every other month for quite some time.

Mr. Warren originated the practice of alerting mining companies about pending legislation. When the *Bulletin* wasn't going out and he was in Carson City, the office was sending out alerts to all of the different mining companies about the different bills. He brought the bills in, and we noted the number of the bill and wrote a summary of what it was all about. Then we had a questionnaire: "Do you oppose or do you favor this legislation, and your reasons why." When the results came in, we collated it all, so that he had some direction about how the different mining companies felt about the different bills. If we didn't get too many responses, and he thought it was a hot issue, we got on the telephone and called people and explained exactly what it was about, and asked if they wanted to send representation in to Carson City.

In the years that I wrote the *Bulletin* I wrote it strictly as news. I didn't make any snide comments, and I didn't call environmentalists "do-gooders" and stuff like that. I figured the *Newsletter* was strictly news, and people should form their own

opinions. When a president speaks, and then a news commentator comes on and interprets the speech for you, this insults my intelligence. I don't want somebody doing that, and that was why I didn't editorialize or anything. And at that time the board of directors didn't want us to editorialize. They just said, "Write the facts and let people form their own opinions." And that's what we did.

That philosophy changed some under Bob Warren. Mr. Warren got himself in hot water when he started on Senator Harry Reid. He got on Harry Reid in the *Bulletins*, riding him about the wilderness and this and that and the other thing. It was the wrong thing to do. I've got the scars to show where I fought with him about it. I do not think that the editorial tone of the *Bulletin* under Bob Warren was always representative of the attitudes of the Nevada mining industry. The mining industry did not want wholesale withdrawal of lands as wilderness, but you don't take after one person about that. We did favor the bill that Chic Hecht and Barbara Vucanovich put out, but there was no reason to vilify Mr. Reid for what he wanted. It could have been done very nicely.

Mr. Warren also tried to promote Jim Santini for senator over Reid. In a non-profit organization, you don't do that, because you depend on your senators and your congressmen to be your friends. In no way do you antagonize them, whether they're running for office or whether they're actually elected. There had to be a lot of fence mending, and I think it's been successfully done. I think once Warren resigned, the rift started to close. Until Mr. Warren began his feud with Harry Reid, the Mining Association never either supported or opposed politicians standing for election.

Evidence of how the board felt about Bob Warren's activities is that he isn't with

the NMA any longer. Warren was his own worst enemy. He zigged when he should have zagged, and he didn't take kindly to criticism. I know Howard Winn, the mining consultant for the NMA, tried to tell him what to do, but he dug his own grave. Early in 1987 a new position was created at the NMA. Rod Higgins was hired in February as assistant director. They interviewed quite a few people for that position. Allan Young, who was president of the association at that time, knew and could personally vouch for Mr. Higgins. I think that kind of swung the pendulum toward him. Warren had kept complaining about how much work he had to do, and he wasn't getting the *Bulletin* out. Higgins was hired to get out the *Bulletin* and pick up the pieces and reduce Warren's workload. That's what it really amounted to.

Late in 1987 the board promoted Mr. Rod Higgins to executive director and reduced Mr. Warren to a consultant. Of course, it didn't work. It was a bitter situation there for a while. Mr. Higgins tried to make it work, and for a while Mr. Warren did, and then Mr. Warren resented it. Finally, Mr. Warren resigned. That was the smartest thing he ever did, because it just wouldn't have worked.

In addition to his attacks on Harry Reid, Mr. Warren owes a good deal of his getting out of the NMA to some of his indiscretions during the 1987 session of the legislature, when mining faced a taxation crisis. Everybody was building everything up, and Warren would come in and say something that would tear it all down, and then they'd have to rebuild. It got to be a mess. Warren just didn't know when to keep his mouth shut and when to talk. He fell into disfavor with a number of directors, and they decided that they were going to demote him to assistant director and promote Higgins to director. He said, no, he didn't want that. He wanted

to stay as a consultant, so they put him in as a consultant, and it didn't work. There was a lot of ill feeling. Warren had run the place for 10 or 11 years, and, of course, Higgins had an entirely different approach to the association than Warren had had.

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In the mid-1980s there began a struggle over the retention of the Net Proceeds of Mines Tax in the legislature. It was ultimately retained with a 5 percent limit. The state was greedy for money, and the gaming industry didn't think that mining was paying enough taxes in proportion to what gaming was paying. It was sort of a snowball thing. When the state starts looking for money, they investigate every possible means of raising revenue. They had just about gotten what they could out of the gambling industry, so the next thing was they decided that maybe the mining industry should pay. An assemblyman from southern Nevada, by the name of Marvin Sedway, made no bones about the fact that he was out to get the mining industry, tax-wise. He figured that they weren't paying enough taxes, and he was about to really get them. During the 1987 legislature he proposed an impossible tax on gold.

The Mining Association hired an attorney, Frank Daykin, who was with the Legislative Counsel Bureau for years. He and Mr. Winn and several of the tax experts from the various mining companies worked together to work out some formula, which eventuated in a total of \$10.5 million that the industry would agree to pay into the state treasury in what they called advance taxes. The second year they were to pay \$20.5 million in taxes, which eventually would be refundable at the discretion of the state—like 5 percent a year or something like that. I don't think any of

them really expect to get it back; I think it's gone forever. [The action Mrs. Foster refers to was authorized by Assembly Bill No. 872, which was passed June 26, 1987. The bill takes note of a proposed amendment to the state constitution that would permit the state to raise the Net Proceeds of Mines Tax. It may be 1991 before the voters determine the fate of the amendment. In the interim, AB872 authorizes the state to "accelerate" the collection of mines taxes. If the amendment fails, the state will not refund the accelerated taxes.—Ed.]

The companies got together, and according to the size of the operation, they voluntarily broke it down into percentages. Like maybe Newmont would pay 10 percent and somebody else would pay 10 percent, or something like that. The percentage that each was to pay was broken down according to the income of the various companies. But it was entirely voluntary; it was not real taxes. It was a thing that the companies volunteered to do in order to keep from being taxed, ultimately.

This was not the only time during the period that I was with the Nevada Mining Association that the Net Proceeds of Mines Tax was threatened. Whenever the state was looking for money they'd look at the Net Proceeds of Mines. Of course, the act is part of the state constitution, and they always realized that they would have to change the constitution to raise the tax, so it was just skirted around. For instance, initially, if a mine provided boarding houses or bunkhouses, it reduced their annual calculated net proceeds for taxation purposes. But the state kept nicking at the exemptions that the mining companies could claim. That's the way they got around having to amend the constitution. For some time there has also been a debate over how much processing of minerals would be permitted under the Net Proceeds of

Mines. For example, Blue Diamond down in southern Nevada manufactured wallboard from their gypsum, and they claimed that the wallboard was not a net proceed of their mines; that it was a manufactured item. There has always been that fine line about what are net proceeds of mines and what are not.

Most other mining states tax their mines a little bit more heavily than Nevada does. Montana has just about ruined their mining industry by their very heavy taxation, and Colorado has fought heavy taxation for years. They don't realize the amount of money that a company has to put into a mine to develop it to start with.

Most of the lobbying the NMA did over the years, we didn't call lobbying. We didn't call it anything. We just went over and observed at the legislature, and that's the truth. When it comes to legislatures, it's wise to have one person who represents a group of people, like we do now. Now if a bill is terribly important, the Nevada Mining Association notifies all the various mining companies so that they can send representatives in to testify. During that 1987 session of the legislature, the mining industry was fighting for its life. If Mr. Sedway had ever got that \$16.50 per ounce tax on gold that he wanted, it would have killed the mining industry. The big miners would probably have carried it, but it would kill the small miners. This state has always had a tendency to kill the goose that laid the golden egg. The minute anybody is making money, the state wants to get their hands in the till. It isn't only in the mining business, it's in the gaming business and it's in the cattle business. They see easy money and they get greedy for it.

Mr. Higgins has activated a program of meeting with the cattle people and the gaming people, so that when they go to the legislature they will all kind of work together,

particularly on taxes. The gaming interests think that they're taxed out of proportion to what the mining industry is taxed, and the mining industry thinks that they are taxed sufficiently, because their overhead is so much greater. There's always been friction between the gambling interests and mining over the equity of their respective tax burdens. Mr. Higgins is now working toward resolving that conflict. I know they had one meeting with the gaming people, but what was resolved or what happened, I don't know, because I'm not with the NMA anymore.

As far as I know this is the first time that the Nevada Mining Association has sought to discuss this issue with the gambling industry. It never really came to a head until Sedway's proposal, which got to be a pretty bloody affair. Marvin Sedway is noted for his four-letter words and a few things; he gets up and he is a little raucous, as I understand it, which, of course, doesn't sit too well with some people. After all, he's an assemblyman and representing the state of Nevada. It got to be pretty furious, and then the mining people hired Mr. Frank Daykin to help them work on the taxes and to help them draft bills, because he was very knowledgeable in that line. He worked very closely with the association in helping them to draft the bills. And, of course, the industry got involved. Newmont Mining sent a public relations girl out here from Washington, D.C., to do some lobbying. And then a girl who represented one of the big mining companies came out from Denver in a lobbying capacity. The 1987 legislative session was a very active one.

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Mr. Higgins is more of an economist than he is a mining person. He's worked for mining companies, but he worked in the capacity of

an economist. He was looking to build up the financial health of the Mining Association. He set up different dues structures, he activated a lot of committees, and he formed others so that the Association could cover more bases, like in waste disposal and preservation of wildlife and rehabilitation of mining sites. He got a lot of people involved, and he's been very successful at it. He also revived the *Bulletin*. Dorothy Kosich, his assistant, is writing the *Bulletin*, and she's doing an excellent job. She doesn't get verbose; she says what she has to say, and that's it. There's practically no editorializing going on.

Mr. Higgins made some significant changes in the working environment of the offices of the Nevada Mining Association. He put everything on a word processing/computer basis. Then he got a desktop publishing system for Dorothy Kosich to do the bulletin on.

One important advance is that Mr. Higgins has been active in trying to get something done about the hazards of abandoned mines on public lands. Throughout Nevada there were a lot of open pits, shafts and tunnels from past mining efforts that had never been covered up or anything, and which were considered dangerous. So through the Nevada Department of Minerals, he helped set up a special division that would try to take care of these various hazards. Most of the abandoned sites were on BLM [Bureau of Land Management] land, but they didn't want to accept the responsibility. Nobody knew who had gone out and dug the holes or had made the tunnels, and they were just out there as a hazard. It was a black name for the mining people.

The idea to do something about the hazards originated through mining in order to preserve the mining industry's reputation and also to protect the public. Like, kids would go

out and want to explore a tunnel; and they'd walk in, and it would go off all of a sudden, and down they'd go. Or they'd start playing around in abandoned pits, and, of course, the slopes weren't stable, and they'd tumble down and get hurt. So they took on this project of filling in open pits and blocking tunnels so that people couldn't get into them. The Mining Association was active in the Nevada Department of Minerals setting up a separate department, which goes out and tries to get the most hazardous ones—the ones that are closest to civilization—taken care of first. Eventually they will take care of all of them. Of course, it's a very expensive project.

The Department of Minerals is an official state department, but it's not financed by the state of Nevada. It's financed by the mining people of Nevada. I imagine if worse came to worse they might have to tax individual mining companies to help finance the project, but as far as I know, they've worked it out of their budget thus far. I have a feeling that some of the individual mining companies are providing equipment and men to help on this project, but I can't say that for certain. This is all handled through the Department of Minerals, but it's one of the good gestures that the Mining Association has made. The present mining people are not at all responsible for this: the BLM should be responsible, but they won't do anything about it. So the NMA just figured somebody had to do something.

Another of Mr. Higgins's innovations has been public service announcements on television that are sponsored by the Nevada Mining Association. He figured that there weren't enough people that understood mining. People don't realize that mining is very closely related to everybody's daily living.

I think that Mr. Higgins's becoming the new executive director was a positive thing for

the association, and I think the directors feel that way, too, from what I gather. They're all very well satisfied with what he's done, and I think they've been very supportive. He's very cognizant of the fact that he is *not* an entity on his own; he's very cognizant of the fact that we *have* a board of directors. We *have* a president. If he wants to do something that might be a deviation from practice, he will call up the president and discuss it with him. He doesn't go off on a tangent, in other words. He's a very level-headed person and a very well-organized person; and he knows what he wants, and he goes after it.

I had a funny feeling when Mr. Higgins was made the executive director. I had been around there too long, and I knew too many people, and he wanted to change the whole structure...and he wasn't sure that he could change me. Then he wanted to rewrite the bylaws, and I've always taken care of the bylaws. When he said he was going to work on the bylaws and raise the number of directors, I gave him a copy of the articles of incorporation and a copy of the old bylaws. I went in and said, "Did you read the articles of incorporation I gave you?"

And he said, "Why?"

I said, "Because you can't raise the number of directors in the bylaws unless you change the articles of incorporation, because the articles limit the number of directors you can have to fifteen." He then rewrote both of them, and they were sent out to all the directors to vote on. The association has grown considerably, and I think that they needed more representation on the board of directors. I didn't have any quarrel with that. I thought it was a smart thing to do, because for some reason or other, people liked to be on the board of directors. And with 15 directors for 70-odd companies; it's very limiting. Even 17 is limiting, but at least it's a little better than it



was, and he's got the leeway of going up to 19. Of course, you can't have too many directors, because then it's too hard to get a consensus on anything. I didn't have any quarrel with him raising the number of directors. I was in accord with that, except that he couldn't do it legally without changing the articles of incorporation, and it could have backfired. I think that in a lot of ways Mr. Higgins is doing a very good job; I have no quarrel with that.

About the end of February or the first of March, 1988, Mr. Higgins called me in and said, "I want you to retire on March 31."

I said, "Very well."

He said that the board of directors had decided it. After you spend 35 years plus in a place, you're not very happy about it. I'm not happy about it now, but that's the way the ball bounces, so you bounce with it.

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EPILOGUE

The objective of the NMA when I started in 1953 was to improve the image of the mining industry. That is still its objective. Mining people have never publicized themselves. They've always taken it for granted that everybody knew that they were mining and that they were the good guys, and that was it. Through the years the Audubon Society and all these different societies have decided that mining is polluting the air and destroying the scenery, and this and that and the other thing, *needlessly*, which is not the case. They seem to say that the land is laid waste to, but if you go out to most mines, they're very neatly kept. The buildings are nice buildings; the excavations are done in tiers, and they're neat and nice. When I started with the NMA they hired Tom Wilson's advertising company to run an advertising campaign in the papers, and we've tried to carry it on ever since. Now in about the last eight or ten years the NMA has gotten permission from the State Board of Education to have a mining education program in the public schools.

Up in Dayton the people who have decided that they don't want mining up there are all Johnny-come-latelies. They're not natives of Dayton or Silver City. They're all artsy-craftsy people who have come up there and decided that they're going to be at the end of the world and have a quiet life and everything. They completely dominated the county commissioners, and a big mining company that had a lot of money invested was never allowed to operate. We didn't have similar opposition in the 1950s, but it was starting then. Government was starting to put on various different regulations, and it just snowballed. It started with safety regulations, and then it got into pollution, and then it got into...well, like right now they're trying to find ways to keep the ducks from drinking water out of the cyanide ponds. Ducks! The ducks can't read, so they get these guns that shoot and scare them off. And they're trying to find certain chemicals that will neutralize the cyanide. Of course, once cyanide dries out it loses its potency. But while it's in the



cyanide ponds, if the ducks go in there and drink it, they're dead ducks. Currently our committee on environmental affairs is having a lot of meetings with the Fish and Wildlife Commission to try to resolve this situation and figure out a way to keep the ducks out of the cyanide ponds.

In the old days it used to be cows. There was a dairy down where my father had his tailing ponds, and he had barbed wire fences. When cattle get thirsty they don't care about barbed wire fences or anything. They just run them down and drink the cyanide water. And then old Mike Maroni would present a bill to my father and say, "One of my dairy cows got in your cyanide pond and died."

And my father would say, "I've got fences and signs up."

Mike said, "I can't help it, Alex. My cows can't read." So every once in a while my father would get stuck. In those days they paid \$40 for a cow.

When my father was mining out in Virginia City, and the old C & C mine was running, I went underground. They would have big stopes, like a big hole in the ground. One guy would be mining, and it would be about 160 degrees down there. I mean, it was hot! One guy would be mucking and the other guy would run the hose on him to keep him cool; he'd muck for about 15 minutes, and then they'd change places. Well, now, in this day and age you do not work under conditions like that. It isn't only the association changing. The association had to change to meet requirements. They got all these various regulations—some of them are good and some of them are ridiculous, but you have to conform to them.

If the Mining Association didn't change, they'd have been out of business, because it was circumstances that changed them. When Henry Rives was in there, they didn't have

OSHA. They had the state mine inspector, but they didn't have the nitty-gritty little things that they go into now. When Mr. Rives had to go out and do something, he went out and did it, but if he didn't have to go out and do anything, he could care less. The Mining Association is an entirely different association now. They try and do things that will benefit the Mining Association as a whole. Rives didn't ever have that idea. He just had a mining association, and people paid their dues, and he paid the salaries.

I was honored by the NMA in 1982 for 29 years on the job without missing a day. I just never got sick. When I broke my pelvic bone, I got on crutches and went to work. I figured I could hurt just as bad in the office as I could at home, and at least the office would take my mind off of it. I think a lot of being sick is a state of mind. Once in a while I would get bronchitis, but it either wears you out or you wear it out. You're not sick; it's just annoying. I just never have been sick.

I never had a vacation when I worked for the Nevada Mining Association. It was usually a one-gal office; what was I going to do? I used to take long weekends or something like that and go down to San Francisco or down to Chico to see my cousins, but after my husband died I didn't have too much of an incentive to go on a vacation. I think in order to enjoy going some place you need somebody to share it with. This thing of going off alone and traipsing around is not my cup of tea, and I'm not a person to have what they call these "meaningful relationships." I'm sorry about that. And I've never seen anybody that I wanted to get married to after Herb died. When Herb was living, we used to go to San Francisco. I like opera; he didn't particularly like opera, but I'd go to the opera. But we'd go to plays together. He was interested in baseball; he'd go to the baseball games, and

I'd go out with my friends. Of course, that was my hometown—San Francisco. We had a great time, and then we'd get home at night and we'd share all our experiences, go out and have dinner and go to the theater. But what do I want to do, go to San Francisco and sit in a hotel room? I mean, all these big cities, now.... You can't travel alone. The Nevada Mining Association has been my life. For better or for worse, that's the way it was.



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## PHOTOGRAPHS



Henry M. Rives, ca. 1950.  
From the Henry Macon Rives Collection,  
courtesy of Special Collections,  
University of Nevada, Reno Library.



Robert Warren, NMA executive secretary; Governor Richard Bryan, and Jim Cashman III, NMA director and president of Cashman Equipment, 1983.

From the Nevada Mining Association Collection, courtesy of Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Library



By the 1950s, strip mining was the preferred method of mining in Nevada. The Kennecott Corporation, a major supporter of the Nevada Mining Association, operated strip mining equipment like this No. 8 shovel. This shovel and its team of large trucks could move almost 15,000 tons of earth in an eight-hour shift.

From the Nevada Mining Association Collection, courtesy of Special Collections,  
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